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THE REVELATION OF DISCOVERY

THE REVELATION OF DISCOVERY

BY

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TO
MY DEAREST BROTHER
ARTHUR C. A. HALL

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NOTE

The first six Chapters in this volume appeared originally in *St. Andrew's Cross*, the next two in the *Churchman*, the ninth is an adaptation of a Lecture given under the auspices of the Washington Churchmen's League, and the last is a paper which was read at the Church Congress.

I have held them long, hoping to find time to round out a series. As this seems improbable I have determined not to delay further their publication.

C. H. B.

Manila,
November 18, 1914

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I

THE RELATION OF DISCOVERY TO REVELATION

GOD'S will to manifest Himself to man must be met by man's will to search for God. Revelation and discovery are two sides of the same shield; or to use a different simile, man's seeking is the receptacle into which God pours His self-showing. Thus another name for the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles might be the Discovery of Christ by the Gentiles. Our Lord's manifestation to the wise men could not have been without their devout study of God's handiwork and a peculiarly active faith. It is a truism to aver that man's receptivity is the co-ordinate of God's providence. There can be no giving without receiving, no possession without appropriation. God's movement manward expects man's movement Godward, even though God initiates the latter as well as the former.[1] The high dignity of the relation of man to God in the sphere of activity is finely brought out by S. Paul in his phrase, *God's fellow-workers*.[2] The fact that in

[1] *Phil.* ii, 13.
[2] *1 Cor.* iii, 9; *2 Cor.* vi, 1.

creative work sometimes the larger part is given to a mind that in receptive mood is waiting passively, but dutifully, upon the gift [1] is not an argument against, but for, an output of energy. The mind and soul become peculiarly receptive and sensitive in their passive moods, because of the activity that went before. If passivity is the mother, activity is the father of every truth that is born in the soul. The climax of criticism and study is power of contemplation, though it is not every critic or student that claims his reward.

It is incumbent upon all men, whatever their condition or opportunity, whether within or without Christendom, to search for God—though they prosecute their search not because they are impelled by a cold imperative but by burning desire. Seeking for the truth—for the absolute, the final, is only the philosopher's mode of expressing seeking for God.

All men, as is obvious, do not start in their march toward the heart of things with a like equipment. Those who begin life as potential Christians, admitted as they are into covenant relation with God before the dawn of consciousness, have an incalculable advantage over their less

[1] Walter Pater in a study of Wordsworth.

privileged fellows. The former have ready at hand a body of absolute truth into which the sincere soul can move freely and easily; the latter can only "feel after" the truth in experimental gropings as

An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

The former are as warriors who have nothing to do but don their armor and prove it in battle; the latter as men who must first construct their armor, without any clear knowledge as to what is the best material.

But large opportunity does not necessarily entail large achievement, any more than small opportunity entails small achievement. The story of the Magi shows how much may be done with little; the history of the Jewish nation, how little may be done with much. The issue largely depends on the sincerity and zeal of the person concerned. Abundant privilege, wrongly used, becomes a devastating curse, whereas meagre privilege, used to the utmost, brings showers of blessing. Privilege carries with it danger as well as opportunity. Covenant relations with God may be distorted into an excuse for pride and a justification for license,

instead of being recognized as a call to humility and strenuous living. To lie back on the pillows of wealth—even spiritual wealth—in selfish complacency means moral loss and ultimate degeneracy. Wherever history presents a boastful Church, intent only upon its pedigree and its treasures, it presents at the same moment a moribund Church occupied chiefly in crucifying Christ. The Christian Church is the sphere of the highest opportunity afforded to man on earth for seeking after and finding God, and consequently should be the scene of the highest flights of faith and the most spirited moral energy.

Faith is the most majestic, but considered in relation to its unfolded possibility, the least developed of human faculties. Faith is not opposed to sight, but is its analogue, and stands much nearer to sight than conventional modes of thought allow. It is the beginning of spiritual sight, bearing to the latter the relation of the acorn to the oak. *Now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face.* Even in this world faith can rise to a height that trembles on the verge of sight. Men gave such exhibitions of it in our Lord's lifetime as to make Him rejoice and marvel. And it is interesting as well as instructive to note that the greatest instance of all was not in

Israel.[1] Faith might be defined as insight, or, perhaps, inwardsight.

One explanation at any rate of the restricted development and hesitating progress of Christianity is the passive credulity existent in its borders. Credulity, especially that easy-going kind that swallows with shut eyes everything that authority offers, is far removed from faith[2]—almost as far removed as is scepticism. One of the prominent activities of faith is scrutiny—not apprehensive but expectant.[3] Faith unites in itself all the good qualities of both credulity and scepticism, but none of the bad. The average degree of faith which we meet with among men of faith in the Christian Church is not high, partly because it has been falsely safeguarded by Christian teachers. "No trusting without testing" has not always been considered a Christian motto. We are only just beginning to learn that if testing with-

[1] *S. Matt.* viii, 10.

[2] "It is from the credulity of Christians that the Christian faith suffers most in days of debate." Hort's *The Way, the Truth and the Life:* p. xxxvi.

[3] *1 Thess.* v, 21; *1 John* iv, 1: Cf. Pascal: "Far from believing a thing because you have heard it, you ought to believe nothing without having put yourself in the same position as if you had never heard it: what should make you believe is your own assent to yourself, and the constant voice of your reason not that of others."

out trusting is scepticism, trusting without testing is credulity; that false conceptions of God and His dealings with men become current when credulity is set as a substitute for faith; that every test to which truth can be put only adds to its winsomeness and power; that no assault can be made on truth which does not create a tidal wave that swamps that which originated it. There is no philosophy so hostile that it does not yield a strong, though perhaps a reluctant, witness to Christianity, and even atheism has been found to have a profound moral significance.[1]

Christian fact is the landscape into which we are ushered as soon as we are born. But contiguity does not necessarily imply possession. A recognition of the historic quality of the Creed does not make the Creed our own. Intellectual apprehension of a spiritual or moral truth no more makes us a possessor of that truth than presence in the vaults of a bank constitutes ownership of the wealth contained therein. Not only does the Creed represent fact but eternal fact. That is to say, fact that is necessary to the creation and interpretation of all true experience. It becomes our own only when it has filtered through our whole nature—intellect, emotions, will. This can-

[1] See R. H. Hutton's thoughtful essay on this subject.

not happen until we have proved it by every possible test, turning upon it all the light that comes to us from whatever source, and, on the other hand, bringing the Creed to bear on every department of life and every phase of living. The most refined faith does not belie itself when it demands evidences for the subject matter of belief. Whatever pitch of perfection faith may have arrived at, there is always a higher degree lying beyond. Conviction is never so deep that it cannot be deepened. So the Church presents a growing body of Christian evidences for the consideration of men, evidences that are as necessary to ripen the faith of those who already believe as to guide into the first stages of faith the sceptic and the unbeliever.

Evidences are of all kinds—historical, philosophic, scientific and moral. From some of them, all are shut out but men of exceptional attainments—the historian, the scientist, the scholar. But the largest part of the volume of evidences—and may it not be added the most important?—is open to the common folk, even though a chapter here and there is sealed. The world is as full of witnesses to God and His truth as it is full of objects and experiences. It is somehow a firmly implanted human conceit that the things of highest value are most distant, due perhaps to the idea

that rarity instead of utility is the test of value; the pot of gold lies at the foot of the rainbow. Beguiled by this false principle men have trodden upon a multitude of evidences of great and lasting worth, to find one or two of smaller account a league away. The search for a merely transcendent God is hopeless; no human ladders are long enough to reach up to Him. But the Transcendent is the Immanent, the distant One is the near One, the hidden God is the revealer of Himself. So, as the sincere soul moves from stage to stage of human experience, of each he exclaims, "Surely the Lord is in this place!" The common things and happenings are the most luminous pages of the volume of evidences for those who have eyes to see. We need in our religious life the spirit of a Wordsworth, which is characterized by "an intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier mind passed roughly by." In the incidental, the commonplace, in to-day's mode of thought, in the objects most within reach, shall we find our material, rich and plenty. To recognize that this or that witnesses to the truth is to bring the thing in question into captivity to Christ, so that ever after it remains a living sacrament, revealing Him to us afresh as often as we turn to it.

II

THE REVELATION OF IDEAL LOVE

THE Apostles' Creed is ideal love spelled out in terms of faith. The supreme moral truth is that God is love, the consequent theological statement being that God is a unity and not a unit. This finds adequate explanation and expression in the threefold Name of the Baptismal formula,[1] Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of which the Creed is but the expansion. But God is not love because He is triune; He is triune because He is love. That is to say, the revelation of the threefold Name is not of mathematical but of moral import. Therefore Holy Trinity, whatever else it may signify, is a mode of saying Holy Love. The Church rejoiced in God's revelation of Himself as ideal love long years before she formulated it with scientific precision.[2] Now, too often, men make God a sort of mathematical problem or intellectual statement, and mistake what is a symbol of Him for Himself. It would mean loss of

[1] *S. Matt.* xxviii, 19.

[2] A truth is always superior in substance as well as prior in time to its best definition. Definition is but an index pointing towards truth; it is not truth's full measure.

power, not gain, were we to formulate a creed of moral abstractions to take the place of the Creed of eternal facts. The truth enshrined in creed and indicated by definition is always that God is love, a moral fact that seizes upon the whole man to the exclusion of no part of his nature.

The essence of the Creed's declaration, then, is ideal love, love that is eternal, not contingent. And what it declares as a whole it also declares in each of its great divisions. Thus it starts out by making the first word descriptive of God's character, a word indicative of perfect love—"Father," a word which, though not complete by itself, implies all that the Creed proceeds to state. It is significant of the mind of Christianity that both the great symbol of faith, the Creed, and the great model of worship, the Lord's Prayer, enthrone this word with unmistakable conspicuousness. It is the keynote of Christian revelation. The Creed puts God's boundless power and His creative office in the second place. He is Creator because He is Father, not Father because He is Creator. His creative work was the product, not the starting point of His love. He was not more really love after creation than He was before, the creation being but an expression of love. Electricity is just as much electricity before as after

the electric spark. If God were Father because He was Creator the Creed would read, "I believe in God, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the Father." But the leading thought in God's character is neither His almightiness nor His creatorship; it is His Fatherhood, and all His other attributes are to be viewed and interpreted in the light of His love. Not satisfied with saying God *has* love, we say God *is* love, thus making love the interpretative attribute of the Divine Being.

Naturalism, on the other hand, starts with the conception of God as First Cause, Creator, and the rest of His character must be considered accordingly. The result is that God's character becomes a variable quantity, to be determined by that law of nature which, for the time being, happens to be most in evidence. As, for instance, when a short time since the survival of the fittest was supposed to be the whole instead of a fragment of the cosmic process, naturalism pronounced the character of the First Cause to be cruel and wasteful. Now, a little later, men are beginning to discover that the corollary of the struggle for existence is the struggle for the existence of others, and love and self-sacrifice are "cosmic roots." The trouble with naturalism is that it must perforce work from slender data, because science is of progres-

sive character;[1] and even if all the laws of creation, the whole of God's providential method were known, the further task would remain of arranging these laws in correct perspective before any final deductions could be made concerning the Creator's character. Just now scientific naturalism cannot see the wood for the trees. Its only justifiable dogma is "all is law"; it is Christianity which rounds out the truth, adding, "but all is love."

The unique wisdom of the Apostles' Creed, which differentiates it from all other confessions of faith, consists not only in its unexcelled selection of evangelical truths but also in its grouping of what it has selected. Its symmetry is perfect. This it is that has enabled it to go through the testing furnace of the ages and come out without the smell of fire upon it. Whenever in the Christian Church there has been a change of perspective in the Apostles' Creed mischief has resulted. Thus Calvinism is the logical necessity of making justice usurp the throne of love. Judgment, ac-

[1] "It is sufficiently obvious, not only that we are at the beginning of our knowledge of nature, instead of having arrived at the end of it, but that the limitations of our faculties are such that we can never be in a position to set bounds to the possibilities of nature." Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition,* p. 198.

cording to the Creed, must be considered in the light of love. Only thus can the thought of it be borne. God is spoken of as Father and Saviour before He is mentioned as Judge. An aged servant of God, reviewing his life's work recently, said: "I have tried to do my duty. But I am thankful that our God is a merciful God." That is, the thought of God's justice was bearable only on the background of His love.

It is interesting to note that our Lord is presented in the Gospel record quite as much in the character of a commending, as of a condemning, judge. And both aspects of His judicial character are intensified when interpreted by love. The commendation of love is as warm and beautiful as the commendation of mere justice is cold and unmoving; and, too, the anger of love is ten times more awful than the anger of mere justice or almightiness—it is the *wrath of the Lamb.*

Again, Unitarianism in its revolt against the tritheistic thought of Calvinism overreached itself, as extremes usually do, and, while striving to exalt the conception of God as love, inflicted upon it a grievous wound instead. As a matter of fact, God's power, not His love, is the leading thought of this philosophy. No one who knows aught of Unitarianism can fail to recognize the dignity of

its moral ideals, but of all religions that claim the name of Christian, Unitarianism is the coldest. One of the deepest thinkers and most refined Christian characters of our day,[1] a man who emerged from the chill of Unitarianism into the warmth of the fuller truth which is in Christ Jesus, says: "I can answer for myself that the Unitarian conviction that God is—*as* God and in His eternal essence—a single, solitary personality, influenced my imagination and the whole color of my faith most profoundly. Such a conviction, thoroughly realized, renders it impossible to identify any of the social attributes with His real *essence*,—renders it difficult not to regard power as the true root of all other divine life."[2] In short, Unitarianism altered the perspective of the Creed, making God's Fatherhood come after His Omnipotence and Creatorship.

Once more, the Kathari[3] were those who made God's holiness His interpretative attribute, and in consequence conceived of the Church as an exclusive drawing-room for saints, instead of a hos-

[1] R. H. Hutton.

[2] *The Incarnation and Principles of Evidence.*

[3] "Kathari" means "the pure." It is the name of a sect of the third century who "laid down the principle that the first duty of ecclesiastical rulers was to preserve the Church as a pure society of Saints."

pital for sinners. Holiness without the constant illumination of love is as a consuming fire to sinful man. It is as unbearable as justice or almightiness considered alone. When Bishop Butler lay dying he said to Dr. Foster, his chaplain, that it was "an awful thing to appear before the Moral Governor of the World." In response, Dr. Foster made mention of *the blood which cleanseth from all sin.* And the great man's last words were: "Ah, this is comfortable!" [1] God's righteousness considered apart was too awful for even this saint to dwell upon; with love to interpret it there came immediate relief.

Illustrations could be multiplied of the effect of interfering with the perspective of the Creed, let alone its substance, but the foregoing, I think, are conclusive. The Creed insists by its very form that all attributes of God, His holiness not less than His justice, the Incarnation itself, all dealings with men here and hereafter, shadows as well as lights, sorrow in company with joy, can be read aright only under the illumination of perfect love. And Christianity is the conscious and deliberate application of this transforming fact to human life, in all its manifold departments and varied human experiences: it is living life in the

[1] Bartlett's *Memoirs of Bishop Butler*, quoted by Lightfoot.

light and power of the filial, and so of the fraternal relation. There is but one Christian truth, however minutely it may be analyzed, however diversely it may be expressed, and it is a moral, ay, a spiritual truth—God is love. And there are but two Christian laws of conduct, both of them given by the founder of Christianity—act as a son, act as a brother: be filial, be fraternal.[1] The world to a man believes in love: the Creed is a declaration of the greatness of love, which is as great as God because it is God. Viewed thus, is not the Creed its own justification? It is not a bald formula of intellectual interest exclusively: it is a mighty bulwark defending what the human race holds to be the greatest thing in the world,—defending it by pointing to its breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

[1] *S. Matt.* xxii, 37-39.

III

THE DISCOVERY OF IDEAL LOVE

IT is far from being an extravagance to declare the Apostles' Creed to be love expressed in terms of faith. For, after all, there is so close an affinity between the three graces, faith, hope and love, that it is hard to find the line of demarcation between them. Love is the greatest of the three, because the whole is greater than any of its parts. Love is all in all. "Whatsoever kills love, kills life; though it should even possess the name of religion, though it should wear the garb of Christianity; for life is love, and love is life." [1] Browning gathers the thought up in satisfying terms:

There is no good of life but love—but love!
What else looks good is some shade flung from love.
Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be warned by me,
Never you cheat yourself one instant! Love,
Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest.[2]

The speaker of these lines says this is so of women

[1] *Ordination Addresses* by Bp. Lightfoot, p. 169.
[2] The "Queen" in *In a Balcony.*

—she knows "not how it is with men." But what man's heart will allow him to say it is less true of manhood than of womanhood? Life is barren for men and women alike until what is laid before us as the declaration of Christian revelation is justified by our experience. Life that is in any sense worthy is spent in searching for an adequate object on which to lavish love, where it is not spent in loving. Just as soon, then, as we are told that God is love, infinite peace and full satisfaction rise upon our horizon.

Probably our earliest conception of love is that it is indulgent, that it does nothing but give. We are consoled by its tenderness, we lie back upon its strength, we rejoice in its confidences. And it is absolutely true that love has but one desire, one office, one power—to give all that it has and all that it is. But there are ways and ways of giving, and until we begin our progress through life's most intricate mazes we cannot know all love's expedients. With nothing but a child's eyes, a child's knowledge and a child's experience, we are apt to accept the word love as synonymous with indulgence. Even people of maturer years are surprised to learn that it is not thus that God makes love known. Of course we cannot tell what love might be able to do if man were a different

creature from what we know him to be; but this is sure, wherever in the human family there is nothing but indulgence and unbroken prosperity, luxury and freedom from hardship, there are to be found the seeds of degeneracy and ruin. God does not make us His darlings.[1]

We start out, then, with the untried belief that God is love, in the sense of being an indulgent giver. In course of time some one of the many sad mysteries of life confronts us and we falter in our belief. "How can it be that a God who is love should permit this? He cannot be *all* love." We assume that what has occurred is quite incompatible with love, whereas it is incompatible only with our imperfect conception of love. The trouble is that as yet we have learned love's essence without having discovered love's methods, which latter we can know only by living in their control. We have yet to perceive that love has vigor as well as tenderness, self-repression as well as self-sacrifice, that love holds a pruning knife [2] as well as a balm, that love often gives its best by taking away most.

[1] The story of indulgence and its issue is well told in the heading of *1 Kings* i; *Adonijah, David's darling, usurpeth the kingdom.* In verse 6 it is said that his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, *Why hast thou done so?*

[2] *S. John* xv, 2.

The story of Job illustrates love in its severest mood. God took away much to give him more.[1] And in the earliest days of his trial Job recognized the justice, if not the love, of God in it.[2] He did not misinterpret, even if he could not comprehend God's motives. Now it is precisely in this connection that we make our mistakes so frequently. We misconstrue God's motives in the existing order. The fault that is perhaps the commonest of all in our human relationships bursts out with a fierce flame in our relationship with God. Because we misunderstand,—and our misunderstanding is largely due to our lack of intensity, and to the shallow way in which we dispose of great problems—that which God purposed to be an inspiration is an irritation, and we attribute to His austerity what is the outcome of His love[3] —the responsibilities, the shadows and the pains to which man is heir. And in such an attitude lie the beginnings of unbelief. Whatever the men of yesterday were able to endure, men of to-day break down under the strain of Calvinism.

Probably the first thing that staggers men in their experience is the dimness of the spiritual world and all that it contains. God, the greatest

[1] *Job* i, 2, 3; xlii, 12, 13.
[2] *Job* i, 21.
[3] *S. Luke* xix, 21.

of realities, is like a man who has gone into a far country.[1] He is intangible, invisible, and there seems to be as much to contradict as to confirm belief. Silence, profound as the stillness of the Arctic seas, is His shrine, and the world about us, that carries the proof of its own reality in itself, speaks of Him with but stammering lips.[2] Some declare Him unknowable;[3] others grasp His reality but rarely and then only for a moment; and to the most strenuous His face is heavily veiled. At best *we see in a mirror darkly:* He seems an influence rather than a personality. We men are, during our career on earth, left pretty much alone with our responsibilities, within certain broad lines having almost unlimited freedom of choice.[4]

This is the situation into which experience conducts us. Nor is it otherwise than the very revelation, which declares God to be love, would lead us

[1] *S. Luke* xix, 12.

[2] Cf. *In Memoriam:* "For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within."

[3] Spencer, *First Principles,* p. 113.

[4] It has been said that all theory is against free-will and all experience for it. The latter part of the saying may be true, but the first part is greatly exaggerated. After all, the philosophic discussion is not whether or not there is such a thing as free-will, but rather, What are the limits of freedom within which the will works?—for true liberty never lacks boundaries.

to expect. God nowhere tells us the contrary. Indeed it is what Holy Scripture constantly implies and states in a variety of ways; it is a truth which, having been put into an aphorism by S. Paul, has become the first aphorism of the Christian religion,—*We walk by faith, not by sight.*[1] God has promised that He will always be conscious of us, though not that we shall always be conscious of Him. He has promised to abide with us, to dwell in us, to sustain us, to be present with us to the end of the world. And we are to arrive at a knowledge of this by faith; that is to say, we are to act just as though we were fully conscious of these things.[2] We are to speak to Him as though we could see Him, we are to discover His promises by claiming them for ourselves, we are to find His strength by using it. So when men chafe under the dimness of spiritual vision as a condition of religion, they are complaining of a law of spiritual progress, obedience to which is vital to human growth; they are declaring that to

[1] *2 Cor.* v, 7.

[2] Cf. what was said of Canon Liddon: "Those who knew and watched him cannot but recall the absolute control with which two great certainties constantly were telling on him. The first was that he was living in the sight of his Lord and Saviour; the second was that he must try to live as he would have desired to live when he came to die."

be the fruit of austerity which is the product of love.

Formerly it was deemed a sufficient solution to the problem of spiritual dimness to point to man's sinfulness. Man had rebelled against God and God had withdrawn Himself in consequence. But this explanation will not stand the test to which it must be subjected. It is an unwarranted assumption to hold that man in primal innocence was governed by laws wholly different in character from those that actually obtain. If unfallen man and man as he is have any kinship the life of faith was the portion of the former and the condition of his development as well as of the latter. Surely the result of the fall was the intensification rather than the creation of difficulty. Its penalty would seem to consist chiefly, if not wholly, in the certainty of defeat, where otherwise there would have been the certainty of triumph, the maintaining an unequal struggle because of a wavering faith and a palsied will in conditions that would not have been too severe for a nature which had proved true to its laws of being from the beginning. If moral obliquity is the explanation of spiritual dimness, how is it that to-day faith in God is so disproportionate to purity of life? We need not look beyond our circle of acquaintances to find men of

exquisite moral fibre and purity of heart "watching the outer wall," eager to believe, yet besieged by doubt. Our Lord Himself shared our experience. It is true that He had *moments* of vivid consciousness of the Father's presence and love, as in the Baptism, on the Mount of the Transfiguration, at the coming of the questioning Greeks—rifts in the clouds which should find their faint counterpart in our lives. But the law of His spiritual life was faith. He, too, walked by faith and not by sight, and He did it not merely as an expression of sympathy, but as a means of progress.

Love, and only love, can satisfactorily explain the seeming absence or farness of God from His universe. The life of faith is not the penalty of austerity, but is due to the considerateness of love; it is not a curse, but a blessing; it has in it more of value than of hindrance. If sight brought Thomas a blessing, believing without seeing (*i.e.* faith) holds in its gift a still larger share of blessing, according to Our Lord's own affirmation in His final and best beatitude, the beatitude of faith.[1]

1. Our inability to have a fuller consciousness of God here on earth than comes through the vision of faith, is due to the self-repression of Him who

[1] *S. John* xx, 29.

is love. Love would fain give itself fully, but the capacity of the object of love has to be considered. A truly great personality among men is filled with self-repression. He could sway by his force of will the wills of others, but he chooses to dissolve his force into influence, subtle and winning. So far as he does the first he is a tyrant; so far as he does the second he is a benefactor. A great personality can be an actual menace to the smaller folk among whom he moves if the pressure is too constant. It would have been too much for the Apostles to have continued longer with our Lord. Three years were all they could bear. *It is expedient* for you *that I go away.* His departure was the condition for the coming of the Strengthener. The rising of the stars is dependent upon the setting of the sun. It has often been remarked that the children of great men fail to emulate their parents, and not uncommonly they are as ordinary as their parents are extraordinary. This is less of an accident than a necessity. During the formative period of life too close an association with greatness is apt to mean loss of spontaneity and independence.[1] I knew two artists who were

[1] Cf. *Romola,* chap. xliv, for an instance of the overpowering effect of a great character: "Romola's trust in Savonarola was something like a rope suspended securely by her

so strongly convinced of this law that they declined an opportunity to go abroad and study with the great masters before them during their formative days, feeling that they would be overpowered in such company and whatever of individuality they possessed would be crushed out.

These illustrations enable us to understand why God hides Himself from man. His work is not a policeman's work of keeping people straight, but of re-creating them. Having endowed His creatures with free-will He reverences His gift. He asks man to win that consciousness of His person and character which it would be an injury to bestow save as a reward.[1] During our days of growth on earth God, who is the source of all personality, renders Himself into an environment that His presence may be *im*pressive without being *op*pressive, that His strength may become ours without our being injured by it. We learn thus to depend upon God, rather than upon the consciousness of Him. Hence there is comfort, not dismay, in the silences of God, a call to higher flights of faith, not an absolution from spiritual

path, making her step elastic while she grasped it; if it were suddenly removed, no firmness of the ground she stood upon could save her from staggering, or perhaps from falling."

[1] See Hutton's striking essay on the *Moral Significance of Atheism.*

effort. With this knowledge we become able to pray hardest when it is hardest to pray.

2. Absence indicates not indifference but interest oftentimes, and all leaving is not forsaking, however it may appear. It is not a forsaking, but an expression of trust, when the mother withdraws her supporting arm from the timid, tottering babe learning to walk. She gives by taking away. A knowledge of the historical fact that Edward III. withheld assistance from his sorely beset son on the field of Crécy,[1] without knowl-

[1] "Early in the day some French, Germans and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the prince's battalion and had engaged with the men-at-arms; upon which the prince's second battalion came to his aid, and it was time, for otherwise he would have been hard pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the King of England, who was posted upon an eminence near a wind-mill. On the knight's arrival he said, 'Sir, the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are about your son, are vigorously attacked by the French; and they entreat that you would come to their assistance with your battalion, for, if their numbers should increase, they fear he will have too much to do.' The King replied, 'Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?' 'Nothing of the sort, thank God,' rejoined the knight; 'but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help.' The King answered, 'Now, Sir Thomas, return back to those that sent you, and tell them from me not to send for me again this day, or expect that I shall come, let what will happen, as

edge of the motive, would lead us to exclaim, "How brutal!" When conversant with the whole situation our ejaculation is, "How fatherly!"

In like manner, trial is always a challenge to worthy endeavor; it is a call from trustful love to trusting love. By leaving us to the extent He has, God gives us our great opportunity in trial. And the issue justifies the principle: who can but admit that sorrow comes to us with fuller hands than joy, that temptation holds in its gift a larger blessing than serenity? To those who earnestly seek, the face of love becomes more and more discernible behind the things of life that are hard to bear and hard to be understood. It is when an earnest man has been through hardship that he begins to discover the true meaning of God's love; to understand that love that coddles is destructive, but that love that challenges is creative; that if love has self-sacrifice, no less has it self-repression, for the sake of those loved holding back what

long as my son has life; and say, that I command them to let the boy win his spurs; for I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honor of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have entrusted him.' The knight returned to his lords, and related the King's answer, which mightily encouraged them, and made them repent that they had ever sent such a message."—*Froissart's Chronicles,* Vol. I, chap. cxxix.

it would fain give, and giving by holding back; that love is virile as well as compassionate, insistent not less than responsive. So when the sceptic asks how all this dimness and pain in which we move is compatible with a Father of love and with Divine Sonship, we will answer by another question, as we look at the Son of God walking down life's dimmest aisles, over life's most cruel stones —"Who but sons of God could meet the situation and accept the challenge?" The cross is a mark of love and trust, not of displeasure.

I cannot close this chapter without acknowledging the limitations and dangers of analysis. Love is supreme because it is unanalyzable. "What is love, Mary?" said Seventeen to Thirteen, who was busy with her English lessons.

"Love! What do you mean, John?"

"I mean, What's love?"

"Love's just love, I suppose."

(Yes, Mary, you are right to keep to the concrete; analysis kills love as well as other things. I once asked a useful-information young lady what her mother was. "Oh, mamma's a *biped!*" I turned in dismay to her younger sister, and said: "What do you say?" "Oh, my mother's just my mother.")

"But what part of speech is it?"

"It's a substantive or a verb." (Young Horne Tooke didn't ask her if it was an active or passive, an irregular or defective verb; an inceptive, as *calesco*, I grow warm, or *dulcesco*, I grow sweet; a frequentative or a desiderative, as *nupturio*, I desire to marry.)

"I think it's a verb," said John, who was deep in other diversions besides those of Purley; "and I think it must have been originally *the Perfect of Live*, like thrive throve, strive strove." [1]

That's it. To love is the perfect of to live. You can know love only by life.

[1] John Brown's *Horae Subsecivae*—'Oh, I'm Wat, Wat.'

IV

THE INCARNATION, THE INTELLECT, AND THE HEART

THE true relation of man's reason to the mysteries of the Christian faith is more nearly gauged in our day than perhaps at any previous moment of time. But fallacy dies hard always; so there are still those who confound superstition with faith, and frown on the most reverent attempts to bring mystery as far as possible within the reach of reason. Nevertheless, it is becoming more and more widely accepted as an axiom that truth is most potent when it is best understood, not when it is least intelligible; that wonderment influences the imagination and minor faculties only, where knowledge [1] masters the whole man.

Rationalism in its current meaning is due to the apotheosis, not the use, of reason. It is a wholly wrong idea to suppose that when we use the word "mystery" in a Christian sense we mean something so sacred, or so obscure, or both, that reason may not or cannot explore it. Christian mysteries are quite as much a challenge to reason as they

[1] By knowledge I mean the fruit of the highest reach of reason and all the concomitant faculties of heart and soul.

are to the affections and will; they are secrets that unfold to the touch; they are an aspect of revelation; they simplify as well as satisfy; they are a charter of freedom to the intellect as well as to the heart and soul of man. Let the mind, however, do its best with them, and there will always remain peaks of truth unscaled higher than all that have been won hitherto.

Herein consists the difference between the rationalism of belief and the rationalism of unbelief—the former makes logic its servant, the latter its king; the former works with able allies, the latter fights a lonely battle. Of course, in accordance with inflexible law extremes meet, so that the ultra-dogmatist and the agnostic join hands when each bends the knee to exact definition, the one to that of scholasticism, the other to that of science. Dogma rightly considered holds out a guiding, quite as much as a warning, hand to reason, indicating a safe starting-point for its processes, rather than a barrier beyond which it may not pass. In short, dogma is a barrier only because it is a starting-point; it does not hem in on every side, but bestows that freedom which is born of order, the freedom that is the gift of the compass and the chart, the freedom that guides but does not domineer.

Thus much prefatory to a consideration of the most inscrutable, and at the same time the most intelligible—certainly the most illuminating—of all mysteries, the coming into this world of the Son of God as the Son of Man, a mystery that is summed up with as transparent simplicity in the "creed of ideas" as in the "creed of facts." "I believe," says the latter, "in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary." Whereas the former reads in its stately measures, "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; Begotten not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man." Herein is declared the manner and the measure of the self-giving of infinite love.

There are multitudes of us who devoutly bow to this truth, but who recognize with shame and sorrow how relatively little our lives are consciously influenced by it. For such there is need of tireless contemplation and study of the Incarnation from

every view-point, and a constant testing of its power in daily life. On the other hand, there are many theists who would embrace belief in our Lord with joy if they could, but they find themselves hemmed in by a whole army of difficulties, critical, scientific, metaphysical. Sometimes there is but one thing to do under such circumstances, and that is to face the problem as it presents itself and work it out. Difficulties concerning faith are never to be slurred over for the sake of comfort, and much less are they to be surrendered to as insurmountable; the former course is slothful, the latter cowardly. Granting this, however, I cannot but feel that the many who suppose that their main difficulty lies in this direction are mistaken and are spending their energy fruitlessly. With an insufficient equipment for scholarly or even accurate investigation, they are apt to become the easy victims of the first (or last) vigorous argument on the one side or the other that presents itself. Faith founded on such a basis could not well help being flimsy and worthless, and unbelief with a similar origin must perforce be bitter and mischievous to an extraordinary degree. I know that the plea is made that men must be loyal to their reason. Undoubtedly; but is not loyalty to the primary instincts of the heart and the high

aspirations of the soul at least as great a duty as the other?

However that may be, experience makes me increasingly sure that what holds most falterers back from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus is gross misconception of the substance of belief; they misunderstand the Christian conception of the character of God and have a very rough-hewn idea of what is meant by the Incarnation. The conflicting cries of a shattered Christendom with which they are confronted may largely account for it; but whatever the reason, the fact remains. It is obviously a hopeless task to endeavor to reconcile the conditions of Christian revelation with some half view of God's character. Conceive of God as mere almightiness and the Incarnation is weakness; think of Him as mere perfection or order and the difficulties suggested by the miraculous are insurmountable;[1] remove from His love the element of self-repression and any special tax upon faith, such as the obscurity in which the dates, authorship and interpretation of some of

[1] Yet the New Testament miracles manifestly issue from law, not from disregard of law, for they inaugurate that better order of which they are the promise. Order cannot be born of disorder. All unexplained phenomena belong to the same category as miracles, being, like them, the product of laws superior to man's present knowledge.

the Christian documents are shrouded, makes belief stagger and fail. It is only when the central Christian truth that God is love has been grasped, that the matters which seem to impugn His wisdom, His power, His character as the source of law, can be fairly tackled. Problems which hitherto seemed hopeless will then be found, however serious, less near the heart of truth than they once appeared; they will still afford ample room for wide questioning and they may never be wholly answered in this world, but they no longer stand as an impediment to active faith.

The first duty of an enemy, much more of a would-be friend, is to endeavor to apprehend the content of Christian truth. That God is love is the foremost declaration of the Gospel, and it is with this declaration that the facts of the Gospel story and the conditions of revelation must be first squared. Now it is encouraging to note that the prevailing purpose underlying most modern theological writing is the vindication of God's love, and that the watchword of popular religion is the Fatherhood of God. It is encouraging because it gives the best possible opportunity for pressing upon men the full meaning of the Incarnation and the complete claims of the Incarnate One. When we talk about fatherhood and love we

treat of what is as absolutely comprehended in essential character as anything in life; our knowledge, too, is experimental, not speculative. There are two attributes of love which stand out prominently: 1. It is self-controlled. 2. It is self-sacrificing. The first has been considered in the previous chapter, it is with the second—that love gives to the uttermost—that we are concerned just now.

Love gives, and gives of self, to the uttermost for the benefit of the beloved. So history records, so observation confirms, so our inmost consciousness never ceases to declare. The measure of love is not the amount of work done, but the depth of the self-sacrifice which lies behind as the soul of service. Love does the most extreme thing possible, it is true, but it throws into the doing all the richness of the personality energized by it. If, then, we conceive of God as perfect love, we must look for the extreme of self-giving in Him, not as an accommodation to man, but as the law of the Divine Being. In other words, admit that God is love and the Incarnation becomes a necessity, a necessity springing out of God's nature rather than man's need. Finite love takes the most extreme step possible; infinite love cannot but take the most extreme step conceivable. Admit that God is love and then it follows either that the In-

carnation has already come to pass and is a fact of history, or else it is something yet to be. If God has not entered our life, living it out in His own person amidst all our limitations, to show us how it is intended to be lived, and in Him may be lived, then is there a pitch of self-giving which Divine love has yet to manifest. History, however, declares that the Incarnation has come to pass, and how and when and where: the love of God has been spelled out in terms of time, and the human mind can conceive of nothing more complete or satisfying.

With a growing consciousness of the love of God, and under the inspiration of His Spirit, holy men of old spoke of what the human heart expected of Divine love. Far back in the dawn of human history man hoped and God promised.[1] But prophecy is more than a promise; it is the footfall of the coming Christ, the radiance of His face. It tells of His burning desire to be among men as man. He comes as fast as man will let Him, held back as He is by human self-will and culpable ignorance, which make the moment of His arrival late. As soon as He can get even

[1] Viewed on one side, prophecy is the expression of what the human soul expects from God; on the other, what God purposes for and promises to man.

slender foothold on earth He is present: how little He asked for is evinced by how little He got—a pallet of straw under a Herod's uplifted sword at the outset, and as for the rest—

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word,
That should set Thy people free;
But with mocking scorn, and a crown of thorn,
They bore Thee to Calvary.

Bliss only rouses evil passions when it beams down upon misery from above; it does not help the miserable until in some real way it shares the misery. And just as long as God was not Incarnate there was an impassable gulf between heaven and earth, save for those who, like Abraham, saw Christ's day by anticipation. Man, with his fierce temptations, his portion of pain in his world of puzzles, until the first conception of a deliverer from heaven was caught, could not but feel that God was either unable to help or unwilling, that He was deficient in power or else in love. At first all the race wanted was the annihilation of things that troubled them. Even to-day there are those who think it would have been a greater manifestation of love for God to have swept all the dark mysteries into nothingness than to have become

incarnate! Why, they ask, if God is love, does life remain tragic? Why does He not destroy sorrow and death? The answer comes not from the theory of the theologian who has a set of ideas to defend, but from hard, patent facts. Both nations and individuals tell the same story: entrance into a land flowing with milk and honey—that is, into serene prosperity where privilege is all in all—is the beginning of degeneration.

And I cowered deprecatingly—
" Thou love of God! O let me die,
Oh grant what shall seem heaven almost!
Let me not know that all is lost,
Though lost it be—leave me not tied
To this despair, this corpselike bride!
Let that old life seem mine—no more—
With limitation as before,
With darkness, hunger, toil, distress:
Be all the earth a wilderness!
Only let me go on, go on,
Still hoping ever and anon
To reach one eve the Better Land!" [1]

The only easy life is the unworthy life; the only worthy life is the arduous life, toiling, battling,

[1] Browning, *Easter Day*, xxxi.

bleeding, dying. What soul that is honest with itself does not know this? Because God is love He could give no such pale, thin substitute for the Incarnation as some querulous voices seem to require. His great expression of love must consist of something more than a fiat of Almightiness which would soothe man by robbing him of the conditions of his manhood. When our Lord came He proved a surprise to man's highest expectancy. He took his place by our side, hushing to rest, on the one hand, the fear that He did not care whether we suffered by suffering with us, and on the other, the fear that He could not help us by giving us security *in* not *from* peril, by showing us how the worst becomes in His hands the channel of the best.

This, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter: the conditions of Christian truth fit only a Christian conception of God, and the first step to take is to ascertain what that conception is, before considering the problems and difficulties that are always clamoring for foremost consideration. Admit that God is love and the Incarnation follows as a necessity; no conceivable substitute can take its place. Forthwith a new relationship is established with the various problems that vex the soul: these do not cease to be, nor are we absolved

from grappling with them. But we are now set free to approach them with balance; a candle is placed in our hand to light us into their heart—though belief does not hang upon our success in answering all queries and reconciling all contradictions.

V

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH AND THE VIRGIN-BORN

THE mode of the Incarnation of the Son of God is a matter of importance. Two Gospels declare the fact of the miraculous conception [1] and the Creed of the West, when we first meet it in the fourth century,[2] presents the Virgin-birth in the same breath with the declaration of the divine personality of the Son of Man. It greets us in history as the foremost fact of our Lord's life and in doctrine as indicative of His unique person and character.

Of late it has been singled out as a vulnerable

[1] "The Spirit of God was never so accurate in any description as that which concerns the incarnation of God. It was fit no circumstance should be omitted in that story, whereon the faith and salvation of all the world dependeth . . . every particle imports not more certainty than excellence." Hall's *Contemplations,* Vol. III, Contemp. 2.

[2] The old Roman Creed was worded slightly differently from the Apostles' Creed, though there is no difference in meaning, *Qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine* being the older phrase dating back to the second century, of which the Roman Creed was in substance a product. See *The Apostles' Creed,* Swete, chap. iv; the book, which is an answer to Harnack, is valuable to any one who wishes to know the relation of the Creed to primitive Christianity.

part of the Creed, an assumption half conceded even by some who are in all loyalty bound to accept, defend and interpret it. But if certain Christians are indifferent to the article in question and ignorant of its true value, there are those, on the other hand, who in unbalanced zeal have attributed to it an overwrought and exaggerated significance, and bound up with it subsidiary and conjectural matters, so gratuitously exposing it to attack. For instance, it has been said too often that God could not have brought about the Incarnation by the ordinary mode of generation, as though the almightiness of the Almighty were limited as to method, and as if God could not have so presided over the common process as to accomplish His purpose thus equally well.[1] Because God chose one method it does not mean that He could not have used another. Izaak Walton's philosophy as he looked at the strawberry was not far astray:

[1] So Father Benson, in his pamphlet, *The Virgin Birth,* says: "A Divine Person could not come into human relationships in any other way than by the power of the Holy Ghost, forming for Him a body of the substance of a Virgin Mother," p. 2; and again on p. 8 he says: "If the Son of God, the Word of the Father was to take man's nature there was no way conceivable save that of a Virgin Birth." Cf. with these assertions Canon Liddon on *The Epistle to the Romans* xvi, 26: "No human being, of himself, could an-

"Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did."

And again such extreme, mystical interpretations have been urged as to obscure the one central thought which its proximity in the Creed to the declaration of our Lord's unique personality at once suggests.[1] Nor is the perpetual virginity of Mary the mother of our Lord bound up with the fact of her virginity at the time of our Lord's conception and birth. The latter is *de fide*, the former is not: the latter bears upon the Person of Christ, the former has to do with a fallible member of the human family, however high her office and character; the latter is the clear declaration of the Gospel record, the former is a reverend inference. If an attempt to identify the "brethren" of our Lord touches the subject, it does so only for a moment and incidentally at that. Taking all this into consideration, it would seem as though the highest reverence would veil itself in reticence, rather than seek discussion, however

ticipate God's method of redeeming His creatures, *Col.* i, 26; ii, 2; *Eph.* vi, 19; *1 Pet.* i, 20. Even the Prophets, though assisted by the Holy Ghost, only discerned this *μυστήριον* (mystery) in a shadowy way *συνεσκιασμένως*." If this is true of the Incarnation itself, how much more is it true of details in the scheme of salvation!

[1] Father Benson's pamphlet is an example.

sentiment and the voice of tradition may mould our inner conception of the matter.[1]

There are two main lines of attack upon the miraculous conception which may be characterized respectively as documentary and physiological. The documentary difficulty is the stumbling-block of the historical critic; the physiological, of the scientist, though each runs into the other.

First, as to the former, it is claimed that the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Luke will not stand the historical test, that they "come from different sources" and "are inconsistent one with the other."[2] It would be vain to deny that the narratives have difficulties, though they are not as serious as they appear to the adverse critic, who almost invariably approaches the documents with a disbelief in, or at any rate a strong bias against, unique phenomena or divergence from ordinary law.[3] Had the Virgin-birth been a non-marvellous fact, probably Keim would have said of it what he says of other facts of the childhood told in the

[1] See Lightfoot on *The Brethren of the Lord* in his *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age;* also Cheetham's *Church History,* pp. 403, 404.

[2] Percy Gardner's *Exploratio Evangelica,* pp. 234 and ff.

[3] *Exploratio Evangelica,* pp. 218 and ff.

self-same records with no superior evidence to back them: "No doubt some things did actually happen pretty much as the recital takes for granted, the circumcision, the offering of purification." [1] And again what he says of the visit to the temple —"To place the simple beauty and just proportionment of Luke's account" beneath a sentence "of condemnation, that were an act of critical cruelty and lust of mere destruction." [2] We may say of the Virgin-birth, as is said concerning a story from a moment of history which in details "is open to a raking fire of historic doubts," that "there is as good evidence" for it "as for many things that men believe," [3] and, it may be added, believe rightly.

The story of the Nativity in both the Gospels that record it is told, not that we may know of the birth, but of the *Virgin*-birth; this latter is the central fact and all else radiates from it. Of course by reason of its character it is not a subject for proof or disproof, but it is as well authenticated as we would expect such an occurrence to be, as well as in the way we would expect.

[1] *Jesus of Nazara,* Vol. II, p. 83.
[2] *Ibid,* p. 134.
[3] Morley's *Oliver Cromwell,* p. 142; also *Exploratio Evangelica,* p. 128.

In so far as historic documents are concerned, we must give due heed to the canons of the historical critic, but we must not fall down and worship them; no doubt they lead us into a larger degree of probability concerning the past, but we are very far from being sure that they are infallible, or that they conduct us into the presence of absolute fact.

But let us look closer into specific objections. It is claimed that the narratives come from different sources, a contention that the believer is no less insistent upon than the non-believer. Obviously there was but one person who originally knew of the mode of Christ's birth, the Virgin Mary; and until her lips were unsealed it was her exclusive secret. Joseph, from first to last, had no more objective proof of what had happened, and even less reason to believe the marvel, not having before him the miracle of Christ's character, than we of to-day. At any rate he was incredulous till God, in His own way, bore the truth in upon his soul (*S. Matt.* i, 19, 20). In S. Matthew we have the story as it came from Joseph, in S. Luke,[1] as it came from Mary—this by implication, not statement, which adds to the force of what is related. That, however, is not all; the narratives are told in such

[1] *S. Luke* i, 26 and ff.

a way as to bear the hall-mark of truth upon them; they are guileless. In the one is the ruggedness, the bold outline sweep of the tale of a silent, reserved man who steps into the foreground for the briefest moment, that he may bear his witness, only to retreat again with haste into the shadows: in the other is the poetry, the delicacy, the minuteness of the mother's confidence pouring itself out into a sympathetic ear and at last reaching S. Luke.[1] The narratives themselves are their own defence, and as long as they remain in the Bible it will not be hard to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

There are variations in the two stories of the Nativity, but variation is not necessarily contradiction, and it is certainly not so in the case under discussion. The same ground is not traversed twice, excepting that which deals with the central fact of the miraculous conception; in all else each story of the birth and infancy of our Lord is supplementary to the other, both of them together giving but a fragment of all that could be told, just as the four Gospels, while supplementing one another, are but a fragment of the entire history

[1] For a full discussion of this, see Gore, *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation,* pp. 12 and ff.

of Christ. The puzzling character of the variations[1] in the two stories is no greater and no more destructive of credibility than that of the variations in the four accounts of the Passion.[2]

S. Mark and S. John do not mention the Virgin-birth, it is true. But had there been mention of it found in the narrative of either we should have had reason to suspect it as an interpolation. These two Gospels being what they are, the one a history of the Galilean ministry and the Passion, the other the unfolding of the central teaching of Christ by a theologian, if the fact of the Virgin-birth were brought in at all it would have to be by force. S. Paul's silence is equally reasonable. He was a writer of letters, and occasion did not demand definite allusion to the mode of the Incarnation, though there are those that infer that he knew of the mystery, and that his knowledge of it colored his teaching.[3] Even adverse critics have to admit that belief in the Virgin-birth was widespread

[1] The difficulty of the two genealogies does perhaps stand by itself; there has been as yet no satisfactory solution of it. Cf., however, Sears, *The Heart of Christ,* pp. 234 and ff.; and Gore, *Dissertations,* pp. 37 and ff.

[2] See any Harmony of the Gospels, or Rushbrook's *Synopticon.*

[3] *Rom.* v, 12-21; *Gal.* iv, 4; *1 Cor.* xv, 45-49; *2 Cor.* v, 21, etc.

and early, as early as the end of the first century.[1]

So much for the main arguments in the controversy. The unsatisfactoriness of the objections of the opponents of the Virgin-birth is on a par with that of the theories by which they account for the rise of the story which is imbedded in the Gospels. No careful student of average intelligence need fear to come to close quarters with their work. Probably adverse critics have advanced their last original arguments; at any rate the later writers for the most part only reproduce in new setting and language those of the earlier. The evidence on which to form judgment is all in, so it would appear; and the reasonableness of the traditional position is even more conspicuous than

[1] Gardner in *Exploratio Evangelica,* written in 1899, says: "Certainly the early chapters of Matthew and Luke furnish proof that the story of the miraculous birth took its rise early," p. 238. And again (p. 239): "The story of the Virgin-birth was certainly widely spread in the Church before the end of the first century." Yet Gardner scouts the narrative as a myth.

Harnack, also, in his *Das apostolische Glaubensbekenntniss,* translated by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1893, says that "by the middle, or probably even soon after the beginning of the second century, this belief had become an *established* part of the Church tradition," though he prefaces this statement by asserting that it "had no place in the first preaching."

before textual, historical and literary critics began their work; the authenticity of the documents, and the clearness and trustworthiness of the evidence which they contain have been tried and not been found wanting.

Now a word as to the physiological difficulty. The Virgin-birth, it is argued, is a contradiction of the method of human generation, and therefore it cannot have taken place. Of course this is another way of saying that it is a "miracle proper," [1] and, as such, must be ruled out of the realm of possibility.[2] That, however, is assuming that a deviation from the course of nature which

[1] "The lines on which the modern educated critic has to deal with miracles are clear. First, he has to distinguish between miracles proper, that is, complete deviations from the course of nature, and remarkable human phenomena which do not violate that course. Wonders of some kind are so frequent phenomena of religious revivals that it would be indeed strange if they were absent from the rise of Christianity. But miracles proper come into another category."—*Exploratio Evangelica,* p. 219.

[2] The process of tearing out the marvellous from N. T. history is hopeless. Men tell us what they tear out, but they do not indicate what is left. Why has not some one after completing his destructive work given us constructively just what Christ said and did? We have volumes of theory in Strauss, Keim, Renan and the rest, but none seems to venture upon a brief, definite, non-marvellous story of the life of Christ.

is not intelligible to us is a violation of it, which by no means follows. Had Gardner lived a hundred years since he could not have accepted as "remarkable human phenomena which do not violate" the course of nature some of the miracles which now seem to him reasonable and possible.

As for the Virgin-birth, it is a remarkable deviation from the course of nature without being a violation of it. Science declares to us that God has left room for it without contradicting Himself or ignoring the processes of generation. Parthenogenesis [1] (virgin-birth) is a commonplace of nature; its earlier stages occur even in the animal kingdom to which man is so closely allied.[2] I do not quote this in an endeavor to strip

[1] Darwin, *Descent of Man,* pp. 254, 255; Spencer, *Principles of Biology,* Vol. II, p. 426; Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition,* p. 199.

[2] Darwin, *Animals and Plants under Domestication,* Vol. II, p. 352; Romanes, *Darwin and after Darwin,* Vol. I, p. 119, footnote, says: "It has already been stated that both parthenogenesis and gemmation are ultimately derived from sexual reproduction. It may now be added, on the other hand, that the earlier stages of parthenogenesis have been observed to occur sporadically in all sub-kingdoms of the Metazoa, including the vertebrata, and even the highest class, Mammalia. These earlier stages consist in *spontaneous* segmentations of the ovum; so that even if a virgin has ever conceived and borne a son, and even if such a fact in the human species

the Virgin-birth of the marvellous but merely to indicate that it is not a "complete deviation" from, or violation of, nature's observed order.

But I attach little or no importance to this line of reasoning, for after all we must not forget that the so-called physiological objection to the Virgin-birth of Jesus does not figure prominently—possibly holds no place whatever in the mind of the true scientist. He may feel it a presumptive argument against an asserted fact of unwonted character, that it chances to be a marked deviation from the observed order of nature, and he would demand a fuller evidence on this account before admitting it. But he knows that there are too many unaccountable exceptions to the classified methods of nature to permit of his denying a unique phenomenon, solely on the score that it is unique. What he asks for is evidence. It is the pseudo-scientific mind which, imagining law to be

has been unique, still it would not betoken any breach of physiological continuity. Indeed, according to Weismann's not improbable hypothesis touching the physiological meaning of polar bodies, such a fact need betoken nothing more than a slight disturbance of the complex machinery of ovulation, on account of which the ovum failed to eliminate from its substance an almost inconceivably minute portion of its nucleus." See Griffith-Jones in his *Ascent Through Christ*, who quotes this and comments upon it, p. 262.

an agent instead of "a mere record of experience," balks at the extraordinary because it is extraordinary. With Mr. Huxley and his beloved Hume we say regarding the Virgin-birth, what we want is evidence. Moreover, we claim that we have it. The parting of the ways is not at the definition of "law" but in the nature of evidence. I venture to affirm that many men and women, especially women, to-day are uncomfortable regarding the Virgin-birth, or have discarded it, because they think that science doubts it as being a contradiction of law; and they suppose that in so doing they are scientific!

It remains for us to try to answer the question, Why did God choose this method of bringing about the Incarnation? Of what moral value is it? We intuitively turn to its fitness as its explanation, and we perceive, in the tendency to surround the birth of heroes with marvel as *e.g.* in the case of Gautama, the prophetic spirit of man, distorted it is true, foreshadowing the mode of Christ's entrance into the world. New Testament miracles have for their chief feature a moral and spiritual purpose, and the Virgin-birth is a conspicuous illustration of this principle. The Gospel narratives that tell of the physiological marvel tell of its function in the same breath, and the

Creed, which is a condensed echo of Scripture, adds its testimony. The Virgin-birth is a standing index pointing to the unique personality and character of our Lord: it is a silent witness planted on the threshold of His human career, indicating that which His after life testified. What the physiological marvel by itself intimates, the documents declare: The Virgin-birth announces a difference from others in the Virgin-born, and Scripture tells the character of that difference. The ordinary process of generation implies an ordinary personality; the Virgin-birth, a unique personality, the documents relating wherein it is unique. Ordinary birth is the introduction into existence of a new being; the Virgin-birth ushers into human conditions the pre-existent One, *God with us* (*S. Matt.* i, 23), the *Son of the Highest* (*S. Luke* i, 33), the *Son of God* (*S. Luke* i, 35). Ordinary birth forecasts a character destined to develop moral infirmity and spiritual obliquity; the Virgin-born is the virgin-souled, *holy* (*S. Luke* i, 35), undefiled. Ordinary birth presents the ordinary man with limited powers of service; the Virgin-birth brings to us the triumphant Saviour who saves to the uttermost (*S. Matt.* i, 21), and reigns over, that is, serves, His people forever (*S. Luke* i, 32, 33). This is the whole story of the

Virgin-born: He enters the world through the same gateway as every member of the human family—*Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb* —but the mode of His conception marks Him off from those whom He calls His brethren, the same and not the same, of a common flesh but of a unique personality and character.

Herein, then, consists the office of the Virgin-birth; it points to, and, as history would seem to indicate,[1] protects belief in the Godhead of Jesus Christ, the spotless Saviour of mankind. It may be that it indicates the relation of Christ to man as the Second Adam; it may be that the operation of the Holy Spirit in this representative Incarnation declares the mystic Incarnation, whereby all the sons of men are born anew and made to share His glorious Sonship. But there is no call to press its significance. It has a dignified and sufficient function if it does naught but stand guard over the Godhead of the Son of Man, and the unique character of the Saviour. This at any rate is as far as Scripture goes.

In this imperfect study I have made no reference to the voice of the Church on the subject, not because I fail to recognize its authority and force,

[1] Swete, *The Apostles' Creed,* pp. 44 and ff.; Griffith-Jones, *The Ascent Through Christ,* pp. 264 and 265.

but because ignorance, slothfulness and timidity are too ready to fall back upon authority in a way that nothing can justify. Blind faith may now and then be a necessity, but it is the exception, not the rule. God, and so the Church, would have us use reason where reason can be used. Of course Christianity is an emotion before it is a calculation. But even so, neither may ignore the other; in religion, passion without logic, though potent, is indiscreet and superstitious; logic without passion, though discreet, is impotent and unpoetic. And while probably such arguments as I have adduced would be powerless to convert to belief, they may enable the believer to give to inquirers a reason for the truth that is his, and make him less susceptible to doubt and hesitancy when the faith is attacked.

VI

THE PARABLE OF THE CROSS

THE reserves of the Creed are akin to the silences of Scripture: they encourage what might be called religious agnosticism on certain matters, or at any rate, by a sort of *argumentum silentii*, they hush the voice of final dogmatic definition, however much they may permit free inquiry and reverent speculation.

Among the untouched subjects is the metaphysic of the Person of Christ. The problem is raised not settled by the Creed. No comment or explanation accompanies the declaration of the two complete natures in the one undivided Person. Of late new elements have been introduced into the study of the question by the results of Biblical criticism and by progress in psychological knowledge which has, in a measure, lifted the mystery of human personality clear of the mists. The old metaphysic has been disturbed. Some men complain that certain theories, due to our enlarged vision, undeify Christ, and give us a God without a Godhead. The effort of kenoticism is, of course, incomplete; it is a passing phase in the study of a problem that can never be fully solved, but which, to

the end, must be a veiled mystery. However, it may contribute its quota even though it may not venture on a final verdict. Dr. Sanday's words are not rashly prophetic: "We should not be surprised if a yet further examination of the subject should result rather in a list of *tacenda* than of *praedicanda*." When the Son of God became the Son of Man He retained nothing that made Him less than perfect man, though He laid aside nothing that made Him less than perfect God. The history of Christian theology is, in its last analysis, a history of varying emphasis on this unvarying truth.[1] Kenoticism lays stress on the first rather than the last member of the phrase, that is to say upon Christ's Manhood, as does the Apostles' Creed—though in the Constantinopolitan symbol it is the deity of the Incarnate One that has the accent upon it, as might be expected in view of the date and conditions of its birth.

The brevity of the symbolic summary of Christ's life at first suggests incompleteness; no mention is made of aught that intervenes between the Birth

[1] Bishop Brooks once said to me in connection with what I held to be an unbalanced statement in favor of individualism: "Man advances in civilization as he walks, by always losing his balance and always regaining it again." The history of theology reveals the same principle at work there.

and the Passion. A leap is taken from the beginning to the end, from the manger with its attendant joys to the Cross with its attendant pains, and thence to the Resurrection, with its glory. But the rapid survey of the career of Christ in the Creed is complete in its bold sweep; it is faith's sufficient food. By virtue of its very condensity it becomes a parable of life. There is the joy of the cradle, the pain of experience, the glory of achievement; the road from the first to the last is the Cross. From height to height, from strength to strength, is from pain to pain except so far as our nature is sufficiently tamed to find self-indulgence in obedience to God. It is certain beyond peradventure that the goal of Christ's purpose was not the Crucifixion but the Resurrection and Ascension. The Cross was the means to an end; it was that which Christ found in the way on His journey from the starting-point to the goal and He used it as a ladder wherewith to scale the last steep cliff of His ascent. Joy, not pain, is the *terminus ad quem* of human effort—self-indulgence not self-denial, for every time we deny the shallow part of self we indulge the deep part.[1] From the joy of beginnings, anticipations, visions, to the joy of completion, achievement,

[1] Cf. Phillips Brooks: *Perfect Freedom*, p. 109.

victory by the way of pain, disappointment, perplexity—that is the story of life as the Creed reads it.

The Cross is something more than the symbol of pain: it betokens to us how He *who knew no sin* was made *to be sin on our behalf*. So complete was the Saviour's identification with the human race that He stopped short at nothing save personal guilt. His love led Him to live with the sinner, not merely outwardly but inwardly; He explored the vast and nocuous depths of sin and shame by entering into the lives of men who dwelt there, not weakly but strongly, not guiltily but guiltlessly. This was not a momentary act; it was His life-work which reached its highest pitch in the Crucifixion, thus making the Cross a fitting symbol of the Atonement. But the efficacy of Christ's work for men lies not in any one part of His history, but in the whole, so that when we consider the Saviour's death we do so only in relation to His life. In ordinary men there is always a leakage in character, no matter what progress toward perfection is made; invariably we become less than our potentiality promised at the beginning. With the Son of Man it was conspicuously otherwise. Without loss He carried the perfection of each moment and each stage of His history into the

days that ensued; so that when He came to die, the whole of His past was in His present. Atonement was consummated on the Cross, but it was begun in the Conception.

I cannot but feel that it is a real misfortune to think of Christ as the sin-bearer merely in the Passion, as it is not uncommon to do. Cardinal Newman in a sermon[1] of wonderful imaginative power depicts the scene in Gethsemane along this line. "There, then, in that most awful hour, knelt the Saviour of the world, putting off the defences of His divinity, dismissing His reluctant angels, who in myriads were ready at His call, and, opening His arms, baring His breast, sinless as He was, to the assault of His foe,—of a foe whose breath was a pestilence, and whose embrace was an agony. There He knelt, motionless and still, while the vile and horrible fiend clad His spirit in a robe steeped in all that is hateful and heinous in human crime, which clung close round His heart, and filled His conscience, and found its way into every sense and pore of His mind, and spread over Him a moral leprosy, till He almost felt Himself to be that which He never could be, and which His foe would fain have made Him."[2] Without ques-

[1] *Mental Sufferings of our Lord in His Passion.*
[2] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations,* pp. 336, 337.

tion this is a fine piece of imaginative art, but it has a flavor of unreality.

On the other hand, when we turn to Scripture our first glimpse of the Man Christ Jesus is as the sin-bearer. Bit by bit through His early years He had entered into sympathetic consciousness of man's guilt, so that when He encounters John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan, it is natural for Him to play the part of a penitent. To borrow Pascal's expressive phrase, He *adopted our sins* in the same way that the guileless, virtuous, loving mother adopts the sins of her son. The son's guilt becomes the mother's, and even doubly so because of the sensitiveness and refinement of her nature. She repents where he is defiant; there are tears in her eyes where his flash with the fire of lust; her soul aches where his is callous. Like her, like Daniel to whom the sins of Israel were as his own,[1] but in a degree and in a way that such a personality as His demanded, Christ seems to have entered into the sins of His brethren. The waters of repentance were to Him no form, but a mighty, dramatic prayer, besieging heaven for the pardon of sins which were His, though not His.[2] His baptism at once signalizes His entrance upon His messianic ministry and His public adoption

[1] *Dan.* ix, 20. [2] *2 Cor.* v, 21.

of the sins of men. John the Baptist forthwith recognizes Him as *the Lamb of God which beareth the sin of the world.*[1]

When at last the Cross is reached it is even with a deepened consciousness of man's guilt that He moves through the shadows. He has an accumulated human experience, and has confronted every form of sin in its concrete hideousness. That which is dark at any time is ten-fold so at the gate of death, and in Gethsemane He staggers under the burden. The cry of desolation[2] on the Cross tells us that the abyss has been sounded. It is as though the mother has stood by her son until in his course from crime to crime he has reached the gallows. She feels the bitterness of the reproach and penalty which he has forfeited the power to feel.

In a similar way Christ has so identified Himself with the sinner as not only to enter the superficial conditions of the reprobate, but also to suffer with a spotless, sensitive nature what the criminal endures with a hardened, sin-deadened nature. "The heart of God felt death in the dying heart of the Son of Man, who is the centre of our humanity." The sympathy of Jesus Christ reached the fullest height because His experience of pain touched the lowest depth. When a child of man is flung

[1] *S. John* i, 29 ff. [2] *S. Matt.* xxvii, 46.

into any of the deeps of suffering, and calls aloud for help, the response of his God comes from below rather than from above, and says: *My child! behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me.* Effective sympathy always speaks from an experience more profound than that of the sufferer to be comforted.

This, then, is one mode of approaching the mystery of the atonement. Probably no one whose lot has been cast largely among the outcast and degraded, and who adopts in man's feeble measure their burden of soul, can understand how to approach it in any other way. The core of atonement is *adequate* repentance, a task of hopeless proportions, save only for One, who is without sin, and yet who is made sin on behalf of the sinner.

Towering above the pain of the Cross is the victory. Two great principles are conspicuous: 1. Character can transcend conditions, finding security in peril, opportunity in rejection, triumph in failure. 2. Kingliness is reached through a priesthood where He who offers is the victim offered.

1. The whole of the Passion is an unbroken victory. It is easy to fall into the error of thinking that the victory of the Resurrection was a sort of compensation for the failure of the Crucifixion, in-

stead of being the final scene in a series of triumphs. The prayer for the forgiveness of His enemies uttered on the Cross was as truly a conquest as was the bursting of the bands of death. There is a glory in a victory which plunges the victor into new battles beyond, which does not belong to a victory from which the victor emerges into an atmosphere of untroubled repose. Each step in the Passion was from struggle to victory, and from victory to struggle, until nothing was left to be subdued.

There are two ways of fighting: one is by daring, the other by bearing. The masterful inactivity of the Cross is the secret of its triumph. Adversity, if it is allowed to do its work, does not break, it makes the character; by its pressure it bends the crooked will straight until it is in line with the will of God. Patience is not the least wonderful virtue [1] to be seen in the Crucified One whose perfection was perfected by His sufferings.[2] It is almost the last lesson of life to

[1] Cf. Collect for Sunday next before Easter.

[2] *Heb.* ii, 10.

Patience! why, 'tis the soul of peace,
Of all the virtues nearest kin to Heaven.
It makes men look like Gods; the best of men
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer—
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

be learned that there may be heroism in not doing.

Christ's work seems to have been in inverse ratio to His limitations. When what men call opportunity was at its height[1] He wept; when He was bereft of everything He kindled a fire that can never be quenched. A man's opportunity is in his character, not in his conditions. *Where* he is is of small account as compared with *what* he is. Christ declares to us the effectiveness of rejected service. The world wants to quench His service, which is not of the quality they desire. But He ignores their *wants* and applies Himself to their *needs* by ministering with His blood to those who shed it.

2. When Pilate wrote the title for the Cross he was moved by mingled sarcasm and spite. But never was sober truth more succinctly stated than when the Crucified One was called a King. The current conception of the function of a superior was painfully illustrated by the wrangle of the apostles for glory,[2] and somewhat amusingly by the Galatians who thought Barnabas was greater than Paul because on a certain occasion the former did nothing and the latter was active.[3]

The Cross is a constant call to men to beware of

[1] In the Triumphal Entry: *S. Luke* xix, 28 ff.
[2] *S. Mark* x, 35 ff. [3] *Acts* xiv, 12.

the pride of place, to measure the worth of privilege by the breadth of its opportunity, to remember that glory is for use, not for contemplation, and, above all, to make nothing less than the whole self the instrument of service. Christ, the Crucified One, was King because He was the servant of all, and the priest offering Himself for all. And just so far as we embrace the same principle do we rise to real dignity in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus far in the history of Christianity it is more of a sentiment than a reality among the majority, that the only true kingliness is that which is in the gift of self-offering priesthood. The Church and the State alike are weak to-day where they should be strong, poor where they should be rich, because of the failure of men to play the part of victims as well as priests.

VII

JESUS OF THE PASSION

NO literature can ever hold men in noble thrall like the literature which portrays Jesus of the Passion. Read aright, it beats upon the life with fourfold stroke. Each of the Gospel narratives presents some feature of the Saviour that is all its own: each is calculated to take captive some part of our nature unwon by the others, as we turn from story to story. The voice of conviction takes on a new and deeper tone as often as we fully surrender ourselves to the influence of this unique record. The Gospels are different from any other part of Holy Writ: it would be safe to trust them in the hands of the untutored where it would be unwise to trust the Epistles. The former bear their message on their face, and this is peculiarly true of the story of the Passion; the latter are in a measure obscure, even to the wisest; the former appeal to the heart of man; the latter, to the trained theological instinct: the former are art; the latter are science.

It is a trouble with many of us that we have so often read the story of Jesus of the Passion as to have blunted the language which relates it; it is

almost with distaste, certainly often with weariness, that we open the familiar pages, conscious that this should not be so, but not knowing how to remedy the situation. Or perhaps our eyes are blurred by some strong theological bias, and look where we will we see only the reflection of our own idea, already too strong in its isolation from other truths. To use an illustration: We were brought up, perhaps, in the bondage of Calvinism, and the Passion is to us an exhibition of divine wrath, nothing more; or in Unitarianism, and all we see is a heroic conduct, so vast as to depress.

Now, however desirable it may seem to be, it is out of the question for us to read the sacred narrative with the inspiration of absolute novelty; for we can approach a thing for the first time only once. It is equally impossible to divest ourselves altogether of ingrained prejudices and preconceptions. Nevertheless, the situation is far from hopeless. If reasonable attention is paid to the *form* and the *method* of the undertaking, the old landscape will become new as when the freshness of Spring's hand touches the still coldness of Winter, and interest will grow where once indifference flourished.

First as to the *form*—and this applies to the study of any part of the Bible. The Scriptures

were not written in English originally, and no English translation is infallible. Every conscientious version is worthy of regard, so we need have no scruples on that score. The fact that one particular version is authorized for public use has nothing to do with personal study. Language, like clothes, wears out; and if, for us, the language of the King James Version is threadbare or in rags, let us look elsewhere. Some persons who are skilled in languages find help by reading the Bible in French, German or some other foreign tongue. But this expedient is for the few. The Revised Version, however, is within everybody's reach; so too is the Twentieth Century New Testament. The former is accurate, the latter realistic. If we can only receive first impressions once, we can at any rate thus make fresh that which is not new.

In the next place, as to the method of our approach. We must surrender ourselves to the story *as literature.* In other words, we must place ourselves at the disposal of a particular author and let him spend his full skill upon us. The Gospels are art. And this is especially true of the narrative of the Passion, which, unlike most of the rest of the history of Christ, is a consecutive story, presenting a complete picture. In this connection

it may be said that minute textual study and analysis should follow, not precede accurate familiarity with the Scripture story in its broad outlines and full sweep. Else you will not be able to see the wood for the trees.

All true art has a central theme which, under ordinary conditions, declares itself without needing outside introduction. The Gospels are no exception, having foreground and background in true perspective. The literature that contains the story of the Saviour's last days on earth took its shape as a revelation of character, rather than as a record of the horrible. It is the Sufferer, not His sufferings, a Character, not His conditions, that occupies the foreground of the picture. The sacred writers did not vie with one another to see which could tell the most ghastly tale. Their eyes were fixed on the Person of Jesus. The background is painted in only to bring out the true proportions of His character. It is Jesus of the Passion, not the Passion of Jesus, the Crucified One rather than the Crucifixion that is the theme. It is a striking feature of the narrative, that details most revolting in themselves are sketched in with so delicate a pen and with such singleness of purpose, that the whole story is one of unique refinement; they resolve themselves into so many indexes

pointing to this or that mark of beauty in the Saviour. *What* Jesus suffered is always kept in subjection to *how* He suffered.

Another thing that he who surrenders himself to the literature will at once perceive is, that in telling of the sufferings and the death, the authors were obviously inspired by the thought of the glory, the victory of it all. They are presenting a picture that calls for homage, adoration, admiration, not for pity. Too often Jesus of the Passion is presented by the preacher so as to stir a weak emotion that is little short of insult in the presence of so august a triumph. It is one thing to be moved to the emotion of love at the sight of what the Incarnate One voluntarily embraces in order to win us for righteousness and life eternal; it is quite another to have our feelings harrowed by an exhibition of suffering made in a way that is only a degree removed from the cheap, lurid tale of a hanging or a murder. Jesus of the Passion as the Evangelists see Him is as truly a victor as is Jesus of the Resurrection. In the Passion He is a victor who is harassed but always conquering; in the Resurrection He is the victor who has so conquered as to have left nothing untamed to His will. "The conduct of the Cross is the principle of the Resurrection."

Nor do the historians of the Passion leave us in the dark as to wherein Jesus of the Passion was conqueror without shadow of failure or line of weakness. But they do not describe it: like true biographers they let Christ declare it by His own words and conduct. His character unfolds itself. Running through the whole narrative are a golden and a silver cord intertwined—the former is that obedience of absolute self-forgetfulness which is the groundwork of love toward God, and the latter is His exquisite sympathy manward, which no agony could distract or diminish: though one is never lost in the other, the former threads its way with startling lustre through Gethsemane's sombre mantle, the latter conspicuously through the texture of the apprehension and the story of Peter's denial, while both wrap the cross in such close and enduring embrace as to obliterate forever its lines of harshness, converting it from the most repulsive to the most attractive of symbols. Obedience to God and the sympathetic service of man are the two-fold duty of life, gathered up in one word, love, and victory is unswerving loyalty to love, everywhere and always.

The foregoing are features common to the four Gospel writers. A study of the record of a single evangelist, with an ear open to his story for the

time being as though it were the only narrative, will reveal his special characteristic. Bishop Alexander in a book [1] full of grace and poetry has indicated among other things how individual each picture of Jesus of the Passion is. The same face and form are one in all; it is the expression alone that changes. If in this view tenderness reigns, in that it is strength; if here we see chiefly the human, there we see the divine.

[1] *Leading Ideas of the Gospels.*

VIII

JESUS OF THE RESURRECTION

THE Christian ground for belief in immortality is not hypothesis, but adequately authenticated fact. The reality and the quality of life beyond the grave are declared by Jesus of the Resurrection. The resurrection that is to be is based upon the Resurrection that has been; or, to put it in another way, the general resurrection has begun in Jesus Christ, *the first-fruits of them that are asleep.* Science and philosophy may afford a presumption in favor of immortality, but there is no security in speculative theology. The Christian creed, on the other hand, from first to last, is a creed of historic reality from which hypothesis is absent. When the Christian pulpit loses sight of this truth, its utterances are bound to be timid and unconvincing. The Easter theme is not the probability, but the certainty of immortality and resurrection; its text is neither philosophy nor science, but *now* is *Christ risen from the dead.*[1]

Men of to-day are as the courtier of the Saxon

[1] *1 Cor.* xv, 20: Surely the emphasis is on the "is," not the "now," as one usually hears it read.

King. They will heed a religion that can speak with confidence of the mystery of existence. It is not a Christian but David Hume, who reminds us in a posthumous essay on the "Mortality of the Soul,"[1] that "by the mere light of reason it seems difficult to prove the immortality of the soul: the arguments for it are commonly derived either from metaphysical topics, or moral, or physical. But in reality it is the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, that has brought *life and immortality to light.*" To study the Gospel of the Resurrection, a rather neglected portion of Scripture, I fear, as compared with the Gospel of the Passion, is to consider immortality at its fountain head, and to gain intelligent conviction.

So unique a fact as the Resurrection demands strong evidence; nor are we disappointed in that which comes to hand. The historical portion of the literature of the Resurrection may be approached with the same assurance of its authenticity as that wherewith we read the literature of the Passion, excepting the last twelve verses of S. Mark, which are of no particular value for evidential purposes, having been added by a second

[1] Quoted by Huxley, in his *Hume,* pp. 201 ff., and, by a curious error, called by him an essay on the "*Im*mortality of the Soul."

century hand, to replace what had been lost by the mutilation of the only available MS. of the Second Gospel. It is possible, if not probable, however, that S. Luke contains the substance of the missing portion of S. Mark, so the loss is not serious. The Gospel of the Resurrection was committed to writing substantially in the form we have it to-day (with the single exception above noted) between the year 65 and the end of the century at the latest, and is one with the narrative preaching of the apostles from the beginning. S. Paul, writing in 55, and referring to *that which also he received* at the time of his conversion in 32 or 33 (*1 Cor.* xv, 3 ff.), bears corroborative testimony to the fact, thus bringing us within an arrow's flight of the date of the Resurrection itself.

A perusal of the historical portion of the literature of the Resurrection as a whole impresses the reader at once with its guilelessness, one among many internal indications of authenticity. In no instance does the story disclose a labored effort to prove the Resurrection; but everywhere we discern the calm certainty of historic fact.

The early paragraphs of each writer (*S. Matt.* xxviii, 1-8, 11-15; *S. Mark* xvi, 1-8; *S. Luke* xxiv, 1-12; *S. John* xx, 1-10) deal with the resurrection of Jesus; the remainder, which forms the bulk of

the literature (*S. Matt.* xxviii, 13-53; *S. John* xx, 11-31 and xxi), with Jesus of the Resurrection. The living man in the splendor of a manhood where perfection is consummated is presented to us by the broad strokes of vivid, unconscious art. Jesus of the Resurrection is one and the same with Jesus of the Passion—the distinction is momentary and relative. Indeed, it is precisely because the literature before us introduces to us a character essentially unchanged by death that we find in the three-fold sketch of Jesus of the Resurrection, whatever its incidental perplexities, a strong proof of its historicity. So far as I am aware, the Gospel of the Resurrection is the one instance in permanent literature where man is pictured as having come through the grave without loss of manhood. It is all the difference between history and fiction; fiction gives what the imagination conceives the situation ought to be, history describes fact; fiction presents the ghost, history the man. The Conqueror of death is all that He was prior to the battle of the Cross. His life, so far as He takes up any intercourse with men again, runs on with that naturalness with which he who has lain down in sleep renews the associations of yesterday. His love for the individuals about Him is as it always was. His mode

of speech and what He says are of the same tone and rich quality as ever. It is to be noted that He did not "appear" to men after the manner of a ghost, but He *manifested Himself* (*S. John* xxi, 1) to His disciples; that is, He unfolded His personality to them as He had always done in the days before the Cross. His manifestations were communications (*S. Matt.* xxviii, 9, 10, 18-20; *S. Luke* xxiv, 36-53; *S. John* xx, 19-23) where they were not interviews (*S. Luke* xxiv, 13-35; cf. also *Acts* i, 6 ff.; *S. John* xx, 11-18, 26-29; xxi). He who as Jesus of the Passion had made it almost His last work to console a dying outcast, as Jesus of the Resurrection makes it His first work to dry the eyes of a weeping woman of former bad repute; He who as Jesus of the Passion had melted the sinner into the penitent by a look, as Jesus of the Resurrection with a touch of incomparable delicacy reinstates him as an apostle and inspires him to service. Everywhere, as in His public ministry, the risen Lord bids His power kneel to His compassion. If there is a change in Him since His conquest of the grave, it is a change analogous to and in line with that ensuant upon the passage from youth to manhood, the change of enlarged experience, of progress. The character is altered only so far as we would expect it to be

altered by the stern schooling of death; beauty is deepened, majesty heightened, power widened. There is a change of gain, not loss, too, in the body; while all the innate nobility and dignity of the physical being are untouched, its limitations are forever shed; it is the old made new. It would appear as though the body of the Resurrection were the body of glory; if there is any distinction it does not appear in Scripture. What a sermon on the quality of immortality, as well as the fact, is the Gospel picture of Jesus of the Resurrection!

Similarly as Jesus of the Resurrection is one with Jesus of the Passion in evangelic literature, S. John's Jesus of the Resurrection is one with S. Luke's and S. Matthew's. There is identity without collusion or repetition; we have three portraits, each with its own distinctive expression, but only one person; in the variety of incidents there is unity of character. It is not incumbent upon us to reconcile the three narratives. We do not possess the clues requisite for the purpose. Of course we are at liberty to conjecture if we choose, but nothing is dependent upon our success or failure. It is no more to be supposed that the three Evangelists would record precisely the same incidents of the forty days, or at any rate do it

from the same angle of vision, than to expect three artists to paint pictures of the same object as much alike as three photographs taken from a common negative.

Nowadays too nice a correspondence in literature or art immediately suggests plagiarism. If the main work is identical, detail is subsidiary in its evidential value. Matthew Arnold was right (in principle though not wholly in illustration) when he maintained that the verbal and minute study of Holy Writ could be carried to such an excess as to obscure its real meaning. This is so whether as applied by him to appreciation or, as in the case in hand, to criticism. But to return to the three sketches of the risen Lord; we can pass from one to another without experiencing any real change of atmosphere; we have the undisturbed sense of being with a single person as we read our way through all three.

I do not think that any one can study the Gospel of the Resurrection thoughtfully without arriving at the conclusion that it was the intention of the writers to present the risen Lord as the ever present One. He is visibly present only now and again, but He manifests Himself in such a fashion as to indicate that, whether seen or not seen, He ever sees, sympathizes and helps. He is

the Good Shepherd whose home is among His Sheep. His manifestations are obviously to train men to think of Him as always near by, always fully cognizant of the situation, anticipating their sorrows and perplexities. Two of the Gospels, the first and fourth, leave Jesus in the midst of men, with no suggestion of any withdrawal. S. Matthew closes his record with dramatic force. Jesus is represented as speaking and saying: *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* He who is among His own is left declaring, as the literature comes to an end, that it will ever be so. In S. John, the last scene depicts Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias, concerned with and discoursing upon the personal affairs of men. S. Luke and the appendix of S. Mark touch lightly upon the Ascension, though not so as to disturb the conviction that Jesus is ever present with His followers; for whatever the mystery of the Ascension signifies, it cannot be explained in terms of space, and does not imply that Jesus had ceased to be true to His promise (*S. Matt.* xxviii, 20). The mode of His presence through the working of the Holy Spirit is a separate question.

I have made the foregoing a study of broad effects rather than otherwise, for our tendency is to be petty in Scripture study and to allow the ob-

vious to be overlooked. Various difficulties raised by the subject under consideration have been passed by, for the twofold reason that criticism is too frequently permitted to outrun appreciation, and, the evidence in favor of the Resurrection is so vastly superior to the opposite contention, that once in a while it is sufficient to accord but a momentary glance to the enemy.

IX

INSTRUMENTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

SACRAMENTS are versatile instruments of the Holy Spirit, and no single examination can exhaust their significance or fully describe their capacity. No one school of theological thought has a monopoly of their meaning, and it is a happy thing, rather than the reverse, that men have approached the study of the Sacraments from various view-points, because in so doing they have come to give clear expression to the different aspects of a common truth. While at first sight they may occasionally seem to approach conclusions that are opposed to one another, a fair examination will lead us to find that the seeming contradictions are complementary each to each, and that when properly related they constitute a harmony. Thus to affirm that the Sacraments are symbols, is not to deny that they are efficacious means of conveying God's gifts to men. It is true that they are symbols, but they are symbols in the ancient and not in the modern significance of the word: they are symbols which bestow the thing symbolized. Or, again, to hold that they are acts of man pleading for Divine aid

is not to deny that they are acts of God responding to man's petitioning. They are both the prayer and its answer.

It is my purpose to consider but a single phase of the Sacraments, and my intention is to take an aspect which will be so fundamental as to lead to all other phases of sacramental thought and interpretation. I am going to try to make a study of origins, so that the Sacraments will discover to us their own simple, natural meaning. But, as I said a moment ago, they are avenues to the Eternal, and we can only hope to set our feet on the threshold; we cannot go far.

It would appear to me that the nature and explanation of the Sacraments is bound up in two words, both of which occupy a prominent place in all theological and philosophical thought in our day. These two words are Immanence and Personality: Immanence, that tells us that all things are in the Eternal and the Eternal in all things; and Personality, which in one sweep brings before us the Source of all life, and the most sacred objects in the Universe—God, on the one hand; man on the other. God's Immanence is an incomparable declaration of love. It is the word which denotes His presence in all things. That is to say the intensity of God's love is such that it is not

content until He has given Himself to the beloved, or at any rate put Himself within such easy reach of man that, if He is not apprehended of His creatures, the fault is not in the will of the Creator. Granted that God animates every expression of life, save only the act of a rebellious will, it becomes a necessary article of faith that He uses the element of water, the stretched-out hand, the bread and wine, as vehicles by means of which He imparts Himself and His life to those whom He loves.

But am I not simply saying, you ask, that the universe is one great sacrament, and therefore any element or act which we fancy may be singled out as an illustration of the fact? Why should these special ceremonies of Baptism, Confirmation (or blessing), and Holy Communion be more sacred than any others? Are they not representative acts merely because the human mind has made them so? The answer to these and similar questions is found in the second of the words we are considering: God is Personality.

Permit me to point out *en passant* that I do not say that God is a Personality, but that He is Personality. He includes in Himself all that we mean by personality, but of course beyond that there is that which is infinite in Him and which transcends

analysis. The human element in God which found expression in time in the person of Jesus Christ, is the basis of our kinship with Him. We were made in God's image. Now the characteristic feature of personality is the will, which controls as a monarch all the other component parts that with it constitute the whole. God as love makes the whole universe a Sacrament: God as personality wills there shall be special Sacraments. If it is within the power of human personality to make itself more or less felt (that is, present) according to will, much more is it within the Divine power. Granted that God is Personality as well as the Immanent One, then we must expect that He will exhibit Himself as He wills, in degrees of presence and in a variety of manifestations, no one of which interrupts or overlaps the other. While He is everywhere in the world, He is in certain places or elements or acts in an intense degree, or for a peculiar manifestation which cannot be found otherwise or elsewhere. While God is in nature and nature in Him, He is in the Church and her rites as He is not in nature. On the other hand, the Church and Sacraments are not the exclusive, but the special, sphere of His presence and activity, if history speaks the truth. The saying so distasteful to modern latitudinarianism, *extra ec-*

clesiam nulla salus, may be untrue in its ordinary interpretation, but if by it we mean that outside the Church there is no covenanted assurance of spiritual safety, it is not wholly untrue.[1]

Before going into a more detailed study of the Sacraments I would add one further thought relating to God as Personality. Thus far we have reached two conclusions: (1) that God is everywhere, but (2) that He wills to be here or there in varying degrees or presence. The ultimate object of His presence is to bestow the gift of Himself on those who are made in His image. Personality which is love, cannot stop at anything short of this. Therefore, in the Sacraments of the Church, God does not mark us with a fleeting touch, but He bestows the highest and most enduring of gifts—Himself.

In the light of the foregoing let us turn to the initial Sacrament of Baptism. What is Baptism in its essence? Suppose a person quite unfamiliar with Christian thought and Christian custom, were to come into a church at the moment the Sacrament of Baptism was being administered; what would he gather from the rite? Surely the

[1] Jean Rivière's Explanation of "Outside the Church no Salvation" (*The Constructive Quarterly*, Sept., 1914) leaves the famous epigram ready to bless the whole world!

first thing that would come to his mind would be this: there is a man who desires to come into the presence of God. He strives to rise up into fellowship with the Creator, and he finds that in himself is a barrier. The barrier is that he is unclean; that sin bars the gate and he cannot reach God. Instead of being wholly filled with despair, he makes a prayer to God asking Him that this barrier may be removed. He tells God with all the intensity of his nature that he is foul and unworthy of Communion with Him, although he aspires to it. Mere words are inadequate, so he takes water and has it poured upon him, declaring his uncleanness and his desire for cleansing in a dramatic prayer: "Just as water cleanses my body, so, O God, do Thou cleanse my soul."

In this simple interpretation we find the origin of Baptism. The sacrament discovers its inmost meaning by pointing to itself. Its explanation is written on its face.

Go back to the childhood of religion, the infancy of man. The black mark of sin is across the human soul. But man was originally made in God's image, and he cannot be happy, he cannot be content, until he comes into the presence of God. So he stretches out his poor stained hands to heaven. No help comes, only a voice that says: "Thou art

unclean. The Most Holy cannot hold fellowship with one who is stained, who is inwardly foul." Then bursts forth a sob, a cry, reaching its climax in a pathetic, dumb prayer "too full for sound or foam." Language is too thin and weak to tell the tale, and the sinner calls to his aid his dramatic instinct. He acts out before God his sense of uncleanness and his desire for purification. Taking water, he pours it upon himself in the presence of God. Wherever in the study of religion, among the Jews or elsewhere, we find the use of lustrations, at the bottom of the ceremonial is the sense of impurity that unfits for fellowship with God, and the desire for cleansing. *Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.*

The climax of Baptism as a prayer was reached when John came, preaching repentance and baptizing with the baptism of repentance. The thronging penitents, as they descended into the Jordan, made confession of their sins, declaring by their ceremonial washing their repudiation of the past and their yearning for purification—purification of the soul by the working of God, as the body was cleansed by the action of the water.

A further and final stage in the evolution of the

sacrament is attained upon the advent of our Lord. Baptism began as a prayer, as man's suggestion to God. Now with the coming of Christ new significance, beauty and power are poured into it. It is clothed with a wealth of meaning, endued with a heavenly majesty, clothed in a robe of might. It was God who planted an instinct in the human heart that made man desire union with the Divine, for the urgings of instinct are the hints and whispers of God. It was God that told man that he was unclean. It was God that bade man pray in that dramatic manner. And when at last Jesus, the Incarnate God, came, He turned prayer into its own answer. See Him as He joins the throng of penitents on the banks of the river Jordan. Already He has become the sin-bearer.[1] He has no sin, and yet He has the sin of the world laid upon His soul. He has entered into sympathetic fellowship with the entire life of man. He has seen,—for He has lived thirty years on earth —He has seen just what human life is, and how wrong it is, how distorted from its original purpose, how stained; and His wonderful sympathy is so deep that He plunges into the very depth of human experience, and takes man's sin into His own pure life; takes it so completely that it is as

[1] *S. John* i, 29.

it were His own sin. Then He goes down into the water to offer the same dramatic prayer to God as the rest have done, to tell His God that man's nature is unclean, and that He, the Sinless One, repents for other men with the completeness of repentance. At that moment Baptism is changed from being a mere prayer into an answer to prayer: there comes a voice from heaven saying: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* When Christ institutes Christian baptism all is made apparent that hitherto was obscure. He takes Baptism and changes it from a mere symbol to the thing symbolized, so that afterwards it brings with it the purification which originally it sought. The long offered prayer is at last answered: and the answer is in the prayer. The Baptismal formula is an earnest that God hears man's cry and an illustration of how much the divine response transcends the human petition. We are baptized into the Name, that is, into the character of the Triune God. Man seeks for cleansing, but God's answer is always broader and fuller, always higher and deeper than the prayer. Instead of being merely purified and permitted to enter into fellowship with God, we are baptized into God, and the voice that comes from heaven is not "abide *with* me," but "abide *in* me."

Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil, to fill to the full. Baptism in man's hands is at best pathetic and powerless. Christ, taking it, transforms it. He has filled it full; it can contain nothing more than it contains. To-day when a person is baptized he prays in dramatic prayer to God that he may be made clean, and the response comes with and in the prayer: *Lord, make me clean: This is my beloved son.* The cry from earth and the response from on high are both mingled in the element of water sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin, and used as Christ appointed.

Baptism has been called for long years "new birth." Let us consider the significance of this thought in relation to the sacramental system. In the first place, birth is not the beginning of life, so that our sonship with God does not originate in Baptism. Birth is the release of life into freedom. Life begins in the embryo, but it is a life that is wholly dependent, that has no defined personality. As soon as birth takes place, the life which has hitherto had no independence of its own gains an individuality which it had not before, and emerges into the atmosphere of freedom. So while we are by virtue of our creation sons of God, we only reach the full measure of sonship in the baptismal rite. We are admitted, that is to say, into

the atmosphere of freedom. But for what does God make us His sons? As a sort of indulgence? Does He give to us this privilege that we may bask in its delight? Is sonship in God a luxury? Nay; it is a responsibility. So side by side with the declaration of this high type of sonship, and admission into it by Baptism, there was instituted, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, something that told man that he was a responsible being and that he must use his strength, the strength that came to him through sonship, for the benefit of his fellows. That something was the "Laying on of Hands," or Confirmation.

Baptism means birth into sonship, and the "laying on of hands," which is not a separate sacrament but a part of Baptism, in early days was ministered in close conjunction with Baptism. Even now, when a space of time intervenes between the two rites, the Confirmation service makes clear and emphasizes the intimate relation they bear to one another. The dignity and reality of sonship are brought before us by the reference there made to Baptism. Confirmation is the filling of the son with inspiration to do for God and for his fellows, and is a sort of bidding him go out into active service. Confirmation has sometimes been called the warrior-sacrament, the sacrament

that commissions men to go and to do. It is necessary that there should be some strong, simple symbol in close connection with Baptism in order that man may realize that sonship means activity, something that tells him that strength is for use, and not for contemplation. For what is life for if not to be given to those who have not life? What is strength for unless to be bestowed upon the weak? What is sonship for, unless to be lived out in that obedience which was exhibited by our Lord Jesus Christ? The "laying on of hands" implies all this.

In tracing the origin of Confirmation we shall find that it, too, began in an instinctive act, an act of affection; that it is not a ceremony wholly apart from life, but an act of the normal human life which God took and filled to the full, adding to it a significance and power which originally it did not possess. The "laying on of hands," in common with all acts of benediction, has its origin in the parental blessing or commission. Here is a young man who is going from his father's home. He proposes to begin an independent career, and the father's instinctive act is to place his arms about the child and speak some word of blessing, to give the gift of inspiration, to pour out, as far as it is in his power, the beauty and richness of

his own love and of his own personality into the soul of his son, to charge him to do his new task well. The son instinctively kneels and prays for his father's blessing, and the blessing comes. The stretching out of hands at such a moment, what does it signify? It means: "I want to give you something so great that it is impossible to express in words or in any other way the fulness of that which lies behind all the yearnings with which my soul is filled." Without question the rite of Confirmation originated thus. And in its origin we find its explanation.

The Holy Spirit descends, and fills the Church of God, so that the Church is the Spirit-bearing and Spirit-borne Body. And when those who are sons of God have arrived at years of discretion, and are beginning to realize the responsibility of life, then the Church asks them to come and get her blessing as they go out into the activities of the world, to receive the inspiration—and remember the meaning of inspiration, "the breathing in"—of her Spirit, that is God, the Holy Ghost.

The Church bestows this gift of blessing through the hands of her representative, who is also the ambassador of Christ and the chief pastor of the Church. Through the laying on of hands of the

Bishop, the equipment of inspiration, of commission, is given. And the Holy Spirit comes to the young warrior that he may do his task well in the name of the Lord. Once it was only a prayer—this stretching out of parental hands in blessing—but now it is also the answer to the prayer, the prayer and the answer combined in one.

We think, too, of Confirmation as being the rite in which men are sent out to fulfil their responsibility in the Christian priesthood, in the priesthood of the laity. They are charged to execute their missionary responsibility. Why is a man a missionary? Because he has a special call to far-off lands, because he sees a need in some dark and unshepherded tract of our country? No; he is a missionary because he is a Christian, and the priest or the bishop is no more a missionary than the Confirmed layman. The latter, it is true, has to exercise his missionary work in a different manner from the former, but the commission to fulfil missionary duty is sealed in the laying on of hands. In the act of Confirmation there is no distinction from Ordination to the Priesthood or Consecration to the Episcopate. What inner difference there is consists in the fact that Confirmation has less specialization in it than Ordination.

Sonship, inspiration, commission: now we arrive at the apex of the Sacramental system in the Sacrament of Sustenance. If *Vita* is an apt term for Baptism, *Salus* is equally so for the Holy Communion. He who rejoices in Sonship, who is filled with inspiration, who is responding to commission, must be sustained from day to day by heavenly food. A man can become a son only once, and therefore the initial Sacrament of Baptism cannot be repeated. A man can receive commission to fulfil his whole duty, to do the greatest thing in the world, only once, therefore there is but one Confirmation; but a man needs sustenance all the time: *Give us this day our daily bread.* And so, when we come to the Holy Communion, we approach a Sacrament which is repeated, and to which one must again and again apply himself if he is to receive its full benefit.

Once more, in order that we may arrive at the simple meaning which contains all other meanings, let us consider the origin of sacrificial feasts of which the Holy Communion is the final development. We shall not think solely of what can be learned from a study of Jewish sacrifices, but shall include what has been revealed by a study of comparative religions. I can only give conclusions, but I think I may say they are reliable conclu-

sions, arrived at by some of our ablest scholars. As far as can be determined it would appear that the use of meat as food began in a religious way.[1] This is a very interesting and significant fact. Men associated the idea of divinity with animal life. They had a desire for strength which is just as intuitive as the desire for holiness or for communion with God. Strength is in the possession of God, and the animal which symbolized God was put to death and the flesh was partaken of, that there might be a transference of life, the worshipper believing that by eating the flesh of the animal he was renewing his own life at its source. At the very beginning at any rate the idea of communion with God did not find place in this religious ceremony. The worshipper was making a ceremonial prayer that God's strength might become his own, or he even imagined that he was feeding *upon* God; and it is extraordinary that this should have been so, for when we come to the full explanation of that which was the merest shadow we are distinctly bidden to eat of the Bread that cometh down from heaven: *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.* Jesus Christ gathers up the primitive thoughts of our savage, un-

[1] Vide Rackham, *Acts of the Apostles,* p. 36.

tutored ancestors, and explains them. He lays hold of their gropings in the dark and illumines them. *Take, eat, this is My body which was broken for you. Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood which is shed for you.*

Turning from heathen religion to Jewish thought, we are surprised to find that communion with God is not in clear evidence, at any rate, in the Jewish sacrificial system. By inference we may arrive at it; but the specific object of the Jewish sacrifice was not to create fellowship between God and man. How are we to explain this absence, or at any rate modification of the idea that emerges so strongly from the earliest heathen rites? I think the explanation is found in the varying emphasis laid on the Divine attributes. The holiness of God was that which most of all impressed the Jew. There was a partaking as food of the animal sacrifice in many instances: in the peace, the trespass, the burnt offerings. But the dominating idea was propitiation, not communion. God, the All Holy, must be propitiated by man, the sinner. On the other hand, God as strength was the early heathen conception which obtained widely. Hence the worshipper would feed on the Divine to gain for himself new life. The vision of God as the All Holy, the Pure, was reserved for

the Jew, and the Jew, looking at his own sinfulness and at the purity of God, exaggerated, so to speak, reverence at the expense of familiarity; other nations in their early childhood exaggerated familiarity at the expense of reverence: they would draw near to God, they would feed on Him.

Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil. In one simple ordinance He combines the various crude conceptions of men: they are to find in Him propitiation, fellowship, food. He is the Light that illumines the world. It was He who was behind the yearning which expressed itself so pathetically in the sacrifices of the heathen; and it was He who moulded and shaped the sacrificial system of the Jews. Now in the fulness of time He the one, true offering, perfect in God's eyes, supersedes, by filling to the full, the sacrifices of the days of old.

The Holy Communion, remember, was instituted by Jesus Christ in close connection with His death. It was prefatory to the sacrifice on the Cross, and it is the explanation of the Crucifixion. The Crucifixion does not interpret the Holy Communion so much as the Holy Communion interprets the Crucifixion. In the Institution Christ is presenting to God the only thing that will pro-

pitiate, to man the only thing that will feed. He is interpreting, fulfilling, all sacrifice, and leaving an instrument by means of which we may plead for and receive all the benefits of His Passion. *Do this in remembrance of Me.* The Holy Communion is a prayer for strength, a plea for propitiation, just as truly as were the sacrifices of former times. But the prayer is its own answer; once more we find petition and answer united in one efficacious symbol. The Holy Communion is a cry for propitiation and the means whereby its benefits are appropriated; it is a request for strength and a partaking of the bread that giveth life unto the soul; it is an invitation to Christ to vouchsafe His presence and a special manifestation, a "real presence," to the end that we may have unbroken fellowship with Him and with the Father in Him.

I have concluded what I set out to do. I have made the Sacraments their own explanation. Viewed in this way they are not artificial appendages to life, but a natural, spontaneous part of human experience; they are not charms, but rational means; they are not the sole but representative religious acts; they are not merely prayers, but answers to prayer; they are not man's cry, nothing more, but instruments of the Holy Spirit.

We must not allow ourselves to use the Sacraments as charms, thinking of them merely as something which God does to us. To be efficacious they demand that we use in them and with them our full faculties; they are something that we do Godward. There must be in our day the same rising up of the whole being to God as there was formerly, when Sacraments were prayers and nothing more; when men longed for a voice from heaven and received no such response as is our heritage. Sacraments are as truly prayers now as in the earliest stage of their evolution. To neglect or forget this aspect of their character is to destroy half their power. On the other hand, to conceive of them as prayers and nothing more, as a ceremonial approach to a God who is dumb or absent or dilatory, is to ignore the progressive revelation of God and to take our stand amidst the ashes of the past.

Viewed in this natural, uncontroversial way, may we not feel that the Sacraments, which have so often been a source of strife and division, will some day be the rallying point for the unification of Christendom? We cannot do better, as we kneel before God's altar, and offer that great prayer of Eucharistic offering which retains us in God's sonship—we cannot do better than make it our chief

petition that God, who created us all to be one family in Jesus Christ, will speedily gather up the broken fragments of Christendom and bind them together in unity of doctrine and in unity of life. May God speed the day!

X

THE REALIZATION OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

IT is not often that language has so successfully triumphed over its limitations as in the inspired phrase the "Communion of Saints." Terse, pregnant, euphonic, like the regal kindred phrase, "Kingdom of Heaven," it is a divinely constructed expression, presenting to the first glance a distinct picture; but having in itself a touch of the infinite, it expands indefinitely under our gaze, so that we can never say that we have explored it to the limit and seen all that it has in its gift to show. Its vagueness is the vagueness of vastness; it is devoid of the unsatisfying ambiguity of mere transcendentalism: and it is equally free from the pettiness of mere definition. If it bids to a duty it also inspires to a vision; if its lower parts touch the earth its full form towers aloft until it strikes through the very vault of heaven and moves in the presence of God. It tells of the joy, the beauty and the power of the corporate life in Christ, encouraging the weak by reminding them that the vitality of the strong is

their portion, comforting the mourner with echoes of the songs of the redeemed yonder. To the lover of his fellows in despair over the cancer of social disorder it displays the vision of an ideal society, diversified, symmetrical, unified, engaged in absorbing into itself the rough and seemingly hopeless elements of society as we know it; to the tempted and sorely tried servant of Christ, stumbling and faltering on his journey onward and upward, it calls with the myriad tongues of those who have had like trials, but who, having been faithful to the end, would cheer us on to a like faithfulness. Nor does it fail to set its task and allot its responsibility. It demands of Christian men that they should be brothers in deed and in truth, and not only by profession; that they should sanctify the manifold relations of life, *until the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.* All this and more is folded into the one simple, brief phrase, "Communion of Saints." Like all powerful influences, it was the child of pain; it first saw light in the shock of battle. Long ago God put it on the lips of men who were defending the character of the Church against purists—unbalanced zealots whose ambition was to separate the tares from the wheat before the harvest. Originally the term was prac-

tical rather than figurative; it had to do with the problem of fellowship in the visible Church here on earth; guarding the rights of the penitent, whatever his sins and lapses might have been—claiming for him the full range of privilege that is the portion of Christian men; not because of what they are, but by virtue of what they desire to be and are becoming, and calling him into the bosom of a glorious family.

The word "saint" had in the early centuries of the Christian era a theocratic rather than a moral significance, and was used much as we use the word Christian, of which it was a synonym: so the communion of saints in its earliest historical application referred to the actual fellowship of Christians, though even then a larger thought lay behind. This takes us back to the fourth century, when the Donatist controversy was raging. The phrase did not become symbolic—that is, it was not incorporated into a creed, until the sixth century, and the end of the eighth dawned before it was generally adopted. But it was wholly the product of Western thought—a fact which is an *a priori* guarantee of its practical quality—and it never found expression in the Eastern symbol; even where the Latin has been translated into Greek, the magnitude of the

thought has been obscured, if not lost, in the process.

During the years that intervened between its birth and its adoption into symbolic setting it became manifest that a phrase had been born worthy of great function, filled with such dignity and meaning that it could be placed side by side with the Holy Catholic Church, as a corollary to and an interpretation of that article of the Creed. The historical study of the Christian Creed leads to the same conclusion as a similar study of the prophetic writings: "Adaptation not less than marvel is a characteristic of divine working."

Time discovered that the words which had been used in a limited sense for purposes of defence, during a crisis in the Church's history, expressed in a happy manner the fulness of a vast fundamental truth. The various parts of this truth from time to time would be brought up by the Church for consideration, and would struggle for utterance, only to find that a body was already prepared for them to enter, until at last the Church, recognizing the great riches imbedded in the two words *Sanctorum Communio*, enthroned them in the place which they have since occupied in the Creed, explanatory of the article which they immediately followed.

A knowledge of the origin and history of the phrase is an aid to its interpretation. It indicates that the mystical has for its basis the practical; that is to say, we can rise to the largeness of the conception of the Church's corporate life on earth, and to a realization of the bond that unites us to those fellow-citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven who have gone before, only from an experimental starting-point. History shows us the natural sequence of the thought; beginning in the relations of life here below, it reaches out beyond time and space into the realms above. On the other hand, practical effort can have no enthusiasm unless there lies before it the vision of the ideal beckoning us on. Consequently there are two ways of realizing this truth, each way being complementary to the other—a subjective realization, which lifts the inner faculties into the atmosphere of ideals; and an objective realization, that infuses the ideal into the experiences and relationships of the workaday world. The former has to do with the sphere of sentiment and faith, the latter with the sphere of activity and works; the former calls for contemplation, the latter for application.

I. We shall first address ourselves to the former. As Bishop Westcott has so clearly indicated, public commemoration of the great and the good,

contemplation of the saintliness of the saintly men of yesterday, is an inspiring aid to the realization of the width and the power, the beauty and the depth of the communion of saints. Our Church invites us to it; but it is a real misfortune that she has confined the names of her holy men to a single period of history. The Apostles are the typical, not the only saints; and it is to be hoped that some day the Church will be bold enough to enrich her kalendar with both universal and local names from any century, remote or near. It was right when the American Church became autonomous that the names of English local saints should be dropped, but the places made vacant should not be forever unsupplied. However, the comparatively meagre attention given at present to the observance of the Saints' days that we have nullifies even the possibilities that exist in the thinly peopled kalendar that belongs to us.

There is something further needed, however, than the commemoration of the saintly departed as mere historical personages who lived in the past, and who are to be regarded with a backward look only. An upward as well as a backward look is necessary. We are to contemplate these characters as still living, though in new conditions. Personality has been transplanted, not extin-

guished by death; fellowship under militant conditions has been exchanged for fellowship under restful conditions. But the contemplation of the society of Paradise will be unproductive of much inspiration, probably, until we have been smitten by the common woe of bereavement. We can reach the unknown only through the familiar, the many through the individual. We require some direct tie to bind us to the Saints at rest. And it is when some relative or friend moves beyond our ken into the realities of the world yonder that we have our opportunity. We follow the retreating personality into its new abode. We are cut off from communication with the departed; as far as we know even the best of men in the spirit world are out of reach of our voice and we of theirs. But affection and faith find outlet in praying for them still. It is obedience to primary instinct that prompts us to this, and we have to do violence to the holiest impulses of our nature to forbear. No truer safeguard against spiritualism can be found than prayers for the dead—spiritualism which is the result of the unsympathetic character of ordinary Protestant teaching about our relation to the departed. Especially with children is this practice important. The parent is in this way presented to their vivid imagination and trusting nature as still

living and loving, and at once a strong and inspiring influence is exerted over the child life. I am not considering the possible or probable effects of prayer upon the departed; merely the reflex action upon ourselves. It will be a good day for the Church when, in her wisdom, she sees fit to guide more definitely than at present prayers which, in any event, are bound to be offered, but offered with a measure of unwisdom until this step is taken. Such petitions as we have at present at the conclusion of the Prayer for the Church Militant and in the first Collect of the Burial Office are delicate and beautiful, and suggest the line of future additions, but by themselves they are too vague, too abstract, too timid; it would be a gain if opportunity were afforded to mention names explicitly in connection with the departed, in the same way that there is rubrical provision for special reference in connection with persons in affliction, or those desirous to render thanksgiving. Thus people would be taught by the strongest kind of theology—the theology that is inwrought in worship—how to make the company of the redeemed above a reality. The dim, far-off land becomes real when we can see a familiar figure there; and as life goes on it becomes more and more thickly peopled. It would be a distinct help

if at frequent intervals we thought of our friends who have gone before in such features of their life above as we are sure of; if we pictured them as living persons, active and loving and unchanged, rather than bringing them before us merely by looking back at the incidents of their earthly career. It would tend to keep alive a healthy affection and to quell undue grief; it would lead us up to a new realization of the communion of saints. Such a habit of mind is instinctive among those who pray God to bless the faithful dead; and conversely, the practice of praying for the departed develops such a temper of mind.

Thus far I have been speaking of a subjective realizing of the communion of saints; but such things as I have spoken of can be little better than aids to sentimentalism, and even superstition, if they represent the whole of our activity in connection with this truth. If, for instance, a person is crabbed and narrow, selfish and proud, thoughtless and indifferent in his relation to everyday duties of fellowship and service, but, on the other hand, prays with diligence for the departed and contemplates with fervor the beauty of the communion of the saints in light, he is arousing emotions apart from their use, and is destined in some way to reap the reward of impo-

tency of will which is always the penalty of an abuse of the emotions. Sentiment without works is a close kinsman of faith without works.

Moreover, fellowship hereafter is to differ in degree and environment, rather than in kind, from fellowship here; it is not to be a new thing but an old thing under new conditions, a higher development of our experience on earth. In view of this there is a double reason for emphasizing the more tangible and commonplace aspect of the communion of saints. The healthiness of our realization of the fact in the realm of sentiment will depend largely upon our making it an appreciable quantity in everyday life. There can be no real desire for fellowship hereafter with the spirits of just men made perfect, no real power flowing from our sense of association with apostles, prophets and martyrs, with reformers, kings of character and stewards of knowledge, unless the opportunities for face-to-face fellowship with the potential saints in our midst are valued and seized. We rise to the truest sentiment from the hardest common sense, to the deeply mystical from the plainly practical. So I shall devote the balance of this chapter to the problems and practical questions on Christian fellowship on earth.

II. It is proverbial that the homogeneous group

together. This is a law of nature, and when peace and harmony and love characterize a company of this kind it is not a matter for surprise; it is abnormal when it is otherwise. Christianity has a higher function than that of merely fusing more closely what is already cemented into a unity by reason of its very nature. In a national way the American Republic is striving to do what Christianity's aim is in a deeper and more spiritual way—to blend into a symmetrical unity the heterogeneous, those who represent every nation and tribe, people and tongue, who have a common humanity, but individual diversities, physical, intellectual and temperamental. And when this shall have been accomplished we shall have reached the consummation of the Communion of Saints.

The communion of like-minded saints takes care of itself without any special effort on our part; no doubt, the homogeneous elements of society require a more thorough mixing and refining than they have yet had, but the greatest need is to reconcile and fuse the warring elements. Overemphasized homogeneity results in the disaster of eccentricity and exclusiveness, in aristocracy and false puritanism, in the creation of caste and the development of bitterness.

A simple illustration will serve to bring out my

meaning. It is becoming more and more evident to all but those who are caged in a very prison of prejudices that the Christian grouping which our Church represents affords room, within certain broad but clearly defined limits, for various schools of thought—schools which are mutually complementary rather than rivals. I would inquire whether voluntary societies of clergy might not do well for their own health's sake to revolt against the naturalistic tendencies which make birds of a feather flock together, and try, instead, to group the unlike. The Round Table Conference at Fulham Palace, which drew together representative men of every shade of opinion, is full of suggestion. The communion of saints, like the family, is a school for training the unlike into the ways of love and forbearance; as long as men of like mind flock together exclusively, eccentricity of thought and character will be fostered and lines of division hardened. This applies, not merely to those who differ theologically, but to all who stand apart because of a failure to recognize the breadth and diversity of our human relations and responsibilities. As long as men look at things from one angle of vision they must be men of limited sympathy and incapable of wide fellowship; they will feel at home only in one set. They

will have no capacity wherewith to render a *personal* service to those outside their own circle. Other sections of society will be to them a strange and uncomfortable company.

I do not wish to be understood as advocating that flabby spirit of compromise that has no vocabulary of unqualified dissent and which every manly man has a contempt for. I am well aware that "controversy may sometimes be too courteous, and in its righteous reaction against bygone intolerance, forget that toleration has its weak side also," and that "the fear of seeming to impute motives to individual opponents, or the anxiety to do full justice to an adverse point of view, often leads to a degree of apologetic understatement which conceals essential differences beneath a surface of agreement, and is, in fact therefore, though not in intention, insincere."

Conviction comes before tolerance, and I believe first of all in the conviction of the Church, and only secondly in her toleration. Tolerance is a means; conviction is an end. But I maintain that there is such a thing as tolerance that admits of fellowship without loss of conviction; that the communion of saints is not hopelessly broken in its higher possibilities, even by the more fundamental differences that divide Christians, much

less by the diversity of which our Church has a right to be proud rather than a need to be ashamed. It is a luxury and a joy to have a like-minded man for a friend; it is a triumph and a strength to be able to commune with one who is not like-minded—and intercessory prayer is the avenue that leads to the triumph.

But enough of the intellectual obstacles that hinder Christians from living in such close fellowship as is worthy of the name "communion." It is becoming more and more a matter of conviction with me that the *moral* causes of our "splintered" Christendom are as important as the intellectual and theological, and that they demand at any rate equal attention. There are four virtues which, as S. Paul points out in his letter to the Ephesians, are in a peculiar sense of social value and make for fellowship. They are: Lowliness, meekness, long-suffering and forbearance.

Lowliness, the recognition that my neighbor is as important as myself, that God has called him as well as me; lowliness, which finds self so little worthy of contemplation that it is forced to give large attention to others, and forms an important factor in that process of self-losing which is the soul of fellowship:

Divinest self-forgetfulness, at first
A task, and then a tonic, then a need.

Meekness, the recognition that one's rights take care of themselves, but one's duties must be cared for: that only those are injured by slights and insults who are willing to be injured; meekness, which is not lying down under injury, but standing up, and standing up straight at that.

Long-suffering, the recognition that the largest portion of the Christian life consists in *bearing;* what we cannot cure we must endure cheerfully and triumphantly.

Forbearance, the recognition that other people have the same right to plead their limitations and defects that we have to plead ours:

Try and be patient then,
In bearing others' failings and infirmities,
Be they what they may;
For you have many a failing
Which other men must needs endure.

To embrace these virtues is to *give all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, and make the corporate life of men and Christians more of a living reality.

III. Lying at the very base of the whole matter is the second great commandment—be fraternal

through the whole breadth of life; especially where conditions conspire to forbid it. This is the burden of S. Paul's exhortation when he tests Philemon's belief in the communion of saints by sending back the runaway servant with threefold injunction to his master to accept Onesimus (1) as a person, not as a convenience—*no longer a servant, but more than a servant;* (2) *as a brother beloved . . . both in the flesh, and* (3) *in the Lord.*

1. The primary relationships of life are not master and servant, employer and employed, buyer and seller. These are secondary, accidental and temporary. The first relationship is between man and man. To forget this is to lose due reverence for humanity; and to think first of economic efficiency is fatal to fellowship; men then become mere conveniences for supplying our needs. And so the long procession of servants winds its weary way through our homes without our knowing anything much about them but their faults. It was not of our society that Wordsworth spoke when he said:

'Tis perchance
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality,
Is by domestic service unimpaired.

And if what I have described be the master's attitude of mind, it is bound to be the servant's. The servant looks upon master or mistress as he or she is looked upon. The heads of the household or firm become in turn conveniences for supplying means of support, and invite exploitation at the hands of their employees. The officialism that runs right through life is distressing, and the mortal enemy of fellowship and brotherhood. Men are never less than persons, nor may they ever be treated as though they were—*no longer a servant, but more than a servant.*

2. But this is only negative. The positive side is that every man is *a brother beloved in the flesh.* The common humanity is a tie which we should not desire, much less try, to break at any link. The criminal in the dock, as well as the judge on the bench; the laborer in his ditch and the employer at his desk, are alike *brothers beloved in the flesh.* It ought to be a matter of pride rather than the contrary to claim men of other races, of a darker color than ours, of different interests and occupations as our brethren, and to feel the reality of our claim; that is the motive power and hope of missionary enterprise. What could be more splendid than the way our Lord clung to that title—the Son of Man—which above all

others told of His community of nature and interests with us? In the Passion, when all the world had turned its back on Him, when less than at any previous moment was there anything in the humanity about Him to commend itself to admiration, He did not retreat upon some remote aspect of His personality, but in answer to the queries of His judges declared Himself to be the Son of Man. No distance in space or time, and no distance in occupation, can make a break in flesh and blood. Consequently sympathy and courtesy are of universal obligation and not for occasional use. We expect our employee to consider our interests first and foremost, and we discipline him if he does not; but to what extent do we put his interests in the first place? Is the obligation not a reciprocal one; and if not, why? How many of us could tell what our employee's mode of life is away from business, or what his ambitions are? How many of us seek diligently for the rights of our employee and offer them, without waiting till they are demanded? Then, too, service can never be paid off by money. Service that is remunerated otherwise is still owed the debt of expressed gratitude. We are informed that in a remote corner of Africa it is the custom, when a person passes a laborer working on or near the highroad, to recog-

nize the duty of gratitude by saying to him, "Many thanks; well done." All this, however, is not distinctively Christian; it is rather something that Christianity presupposes, a foundation upon which it builds. Relations of life are first humanized, then spiritualized.

3. Under the influence of Christianity the brother in the flesh becomes the brother in the Lord. There is too little practical admission of the reality of spiritual ties, and the obligations that they involve. I am not one of those who think that every man who appears on the horizon of ecclesiastical life should be asked to take up some so-called "Church work." There are diversities of gifts in the Communion of Saints, and probably the minority of men are fitted for the Brotherhood of S. Andrew or kindred societies. For the most part the sphere of the Christian man's spiritual activities is in the home and in his daily vocation; but no man may ever forget that he is the keeper of his brother's character, and that he can never escape from the duty of sustaining the morally weak and those whose faith is dim. It is not for me to say just how he is to fulfil this his responsibility; that is a matter for the individual conscience of each. But the principle remains and there is no absolution from it.

It is in the parochial family, especially, that the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of our fellows should find its opportunity. Every time a child is baptized or a person confirmed, the call comes not merely to the clergy of the parish, but to the body of the laity, to be a spiritual support to the newly received member. Our great difficulty just now, in the cities at any rate, lies in the fact that the parish has given place to the congregation. Instead of a compact body where life touches life every day, and those who worship side by side on Sunday work side by side on Monday, there is a weekly gathering of units who have little or no knowledge of one another. The Sunday gathering should be the representative, not the only one.

Surely something should be done to make child life feel that it is in the heart of a great, loving family interested in its welfare; and every newly admitted communicant has the same need as the child. Baptism and the Holy Communion are rites that presuppose compact organic life in the congregation ready to be used for the support of each of the brethren. The layman is the special, though by no means the exclusive, charge of the clergy; he is to be cared for by the whole parochial body. This is not commonly recognized; as a result many

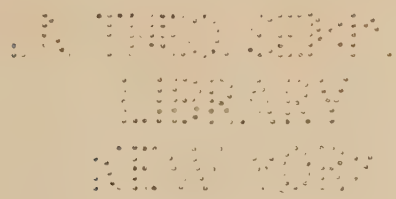
people to their undoing lean their whole weight on the rector, the one person who seems to have any interest in their spiritual life. They become, not members of a family giving to and taking from all the other members, but adherents to a person. If in the frailty of human nature that person fails in belief or in morals, or even in the providence of God is removed by change or death, the foundations of life are shattered. The pastor ought not to be the *only* but the *leading* support of the members of the parochial family. It is a common and painful fact that scores of penitents, who have come back to their Father's house with joy and hope, fall away again, not because the clergy, or persons here and there have failed to encourage and support them, but because the Christian family, as represented by the parish, were indifferent, or worse; in the "far country" there is fellowship, at any rate more cordial than the communion of saints as far as they have had experience, and thither they retreat.

Just how we are to compact parish life in great cities I do not know; this, however, I do know—we have no right to acquiesce in conditions as they are, and we are to keep at the task before us until we have solved the difficulty. But it will not be a far cry to the solution of the real problem

if we get a living conviction that each person owes a debt of moral and spiritual support to the weak and erring, especially to those that are of the household of faith; and that this obligation is as incumbent upon us as providing bread for our children. Nor can the duty be delegated to others. Guilds and societies in the Church are an admission of weakness not less than a means of strength. They are a declaration that the family character of the parish is incomplete and must be supplemented by artificial aids; and that many are failing to recognize a general duty which is thus thrust upon the few.

In what I have said I have tried to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, because I desire to indicate the near relationship of the practical to the mystical, and how close-woven here and hereafter are. I have, as it were, turned a jewel in the sunlight, and allowed it to flash forth some of its varied rays. It is beyond the knowledge and understanding of man what the full wealth of meaning is in the truth half revealed and half concealed by the words Communion of Saints. But we tremble on the verge of knowing, when we are true to our duties as Christian brothers in the common life of our day. The man who is careful to cultivate in the home circle those sweet and delicate

Christian graces that cling to the garments of sympathy and thoughtfulness; who prays over his friendships and possible friendships, bringing the refinements of the Incarnation into the former and the power of the Incarnation into the latter; who pants for *wide* comradeship as well as *deep*, is storing away victories that will rise up and bless him as life progresses. He will graduate easily and naturally into that profound, unbroken, satisfying fellowship in the multitude which no man can number, for which he has created capacity in himself, and which will be his portion in the ripeness of God's times and in the richness of His rewards.



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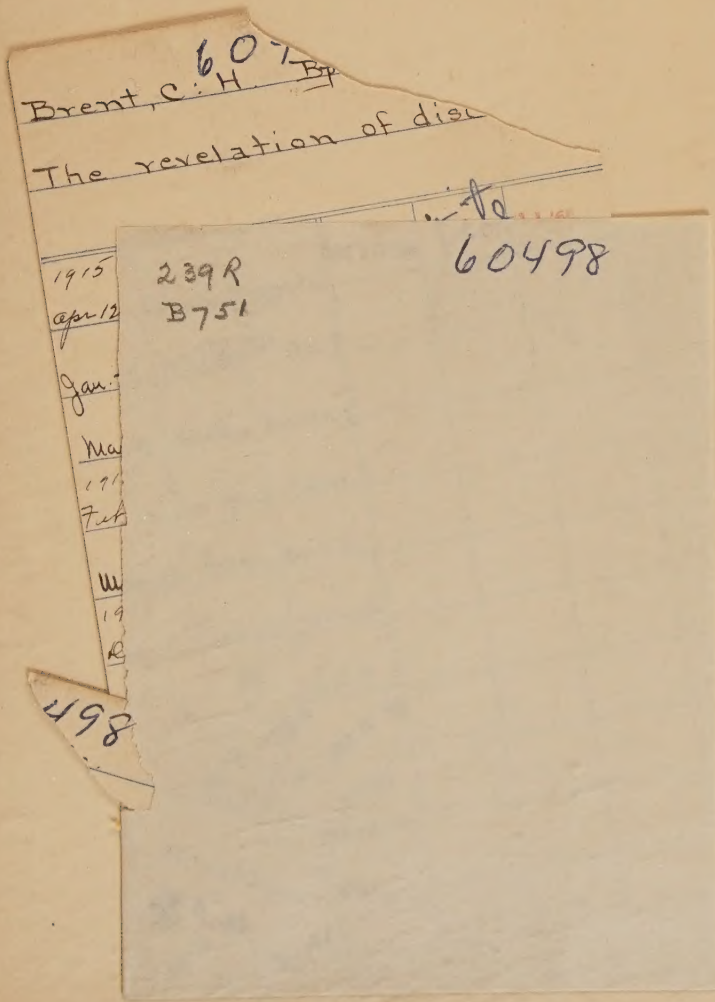
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